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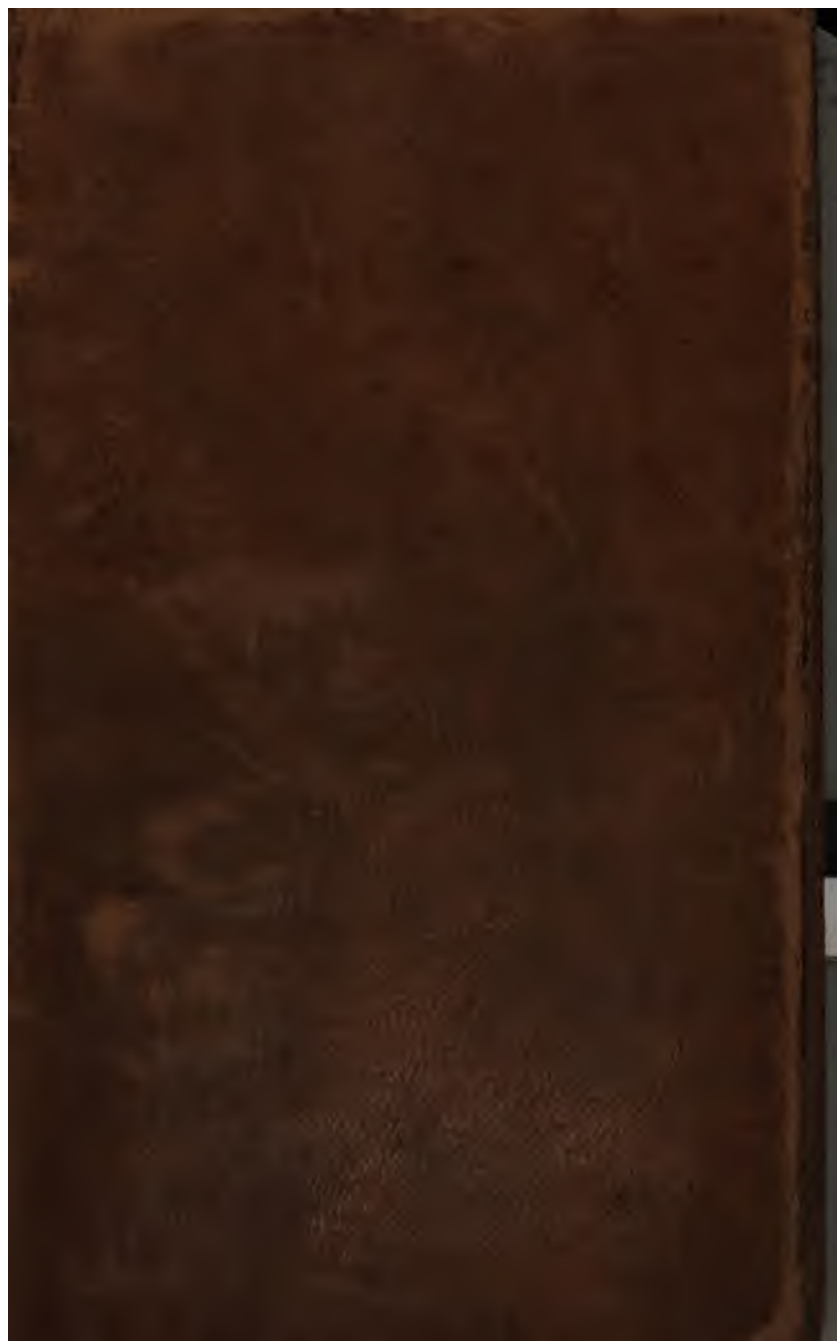
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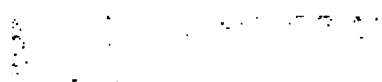
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THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BY
EXPLORABILIS.

VOL. II.

A NEW EDITION.



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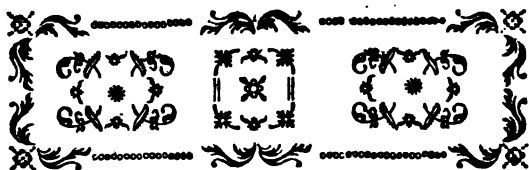
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THE INVISIBLE SPY.



B O O K V.

C H A P. I.

The Author's Introduction to this Volume consists only of an Apology for making no Introduction at all, and his Reasons for that Omission.

SINCE my setting about this work, I have seen several late treatises that are half taken up with introductory prefaces to the public. — On a serious examination to what end those long discourses were penned, they seemed to me to have been occasioned either by one or the other of the following motives: First, that an author having contracted with his bookseller for a certain number of sheets, without having well considered whether his head be stored with subject matter to make good his engagement, finds himself under a necessity of filling up the vacant pages by saying something by way of an introduction, preface, or advertisement to the reader. Or, secondly, that fearing the eyes of the public will not be sufficiently open to the merit of his

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performance; or, perhaps, not have the curiosity even to look into it at all, he thinks proper to bespeak their favour by a pompous prelude, and sounds his own praises, like a trumpeter at the door of a puppet-show.

Now I am too great a lover of liberty ever to bind myself by any such slavish agreement: the first of these incentives is quite out of the question, and cannot possibly have any weight with me; and as to the second, — as a more perfect knowledge of myself than I perceive some others have, will not permit me to be over-vain in any thing I do, so the indolence of my nature will not permit me to be over-anxious for the success. Besides, not having the temptation of the motives aforesaid, I have more adventures to relate than can be easily crowded into this volume; therefore have neither time nor paper to spare for an address, which would afford so little satisfaction to myself in the writing, and perhaps less to my reader in the perusing.



CHAP. II.

Contains such Matters as, it is highly probable, will be the least pleasing to those for whose Service it is most intended.

THERE is, according to the wise man's phrase, a folly under the sun, which, in my opinion, has as little to be said for it as any of the many others of the present age; — and that is — an insatiable inquisitiveness into future events, as if the foreknowledge of what is to come, would enable us either to alleviate or avert the decrees of Providence. — Yet are all ages, all degrees of both sexes, tainted, more or less, with this epidemic frenzy. — It cannot but afford the most admonishing, as well as melancholy reflections, in a thinking
ing

ing mind, to observe how many impostors, in and about this great town, are maintained by pretending to the art of divination, while the industrious followers of lawful occupations perish for want of due encouragement.

As I was one day on my Invisible Progressions, I accompanied a mingled crowd of people into a house situated in one of the most obscure parts of the city:—at first I imagined that this was some private chapel, where persons resorted to pay their adorations to the Deity in a manner not authorised by the government; but was soon convinced of my mistake, when, instead of a pulpit and desk, I found the room we came into furnished only with globes and telescopes, and other implements of a soothsayer and astrologer.—I had not patience to hear what idle predictions this oracle would spout forth, especially as I had no acquaintance with any of those who I saw came to consult him; so took my leave of the deceiver and the deceived, full of indignation against the one, and a pity mingled with contempt for the other. For what can be said in defence of the understandings of those people, who waste their time and money in consulting those abject dealers in futurity!—creatures who would make you believe they can read the most hidden decrees of Fate in the grounds of coffee, tea, and chocolate!—I had often heard much talk of these conjurors, but not till I was convinced by the testimony of my own senses, could ever be brought to believe, that persons endowed with a liberal education, could descend so far as to listen to their inconsistent prate, much less give credit to what they uttered. But so strong is the desire of looking into the seeds of time, especially among the fair sex, that sometimes the most proud, as well as the most nice and delicate, will throw aside all consideration of

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what they are, or would be thought, and for the sake of being told their fortune, fend for, carefs, and associate themselves with the very loweft and moft dirty wretches in human nature.

Lyfetta is defcended from a very ancient and honourable houfe:—ſhe lived, till confiderably turned on the wrong fide of thirty, without difcovering the leaft inclination for marriage, much lefs gave any room for the moft cenforious ever to ſuſpect ſhe encouraged any private gallantries; and the whole tenor of her conduct was ſuch as no one could imagine her capable of harbouring any notions beneath the dignity of her birth and character. A long acquaintance gave me the privilege of viſiting her pretty frequently, and I never was denied acceſs:—I was one day at her houſe when ſhe had no other company than a young lady with whom ſhe was extremely intimate. — While we were drinking tea, her woman came running into the room, and with a ſignificant tone of voice ſaid, — ‘ Madam, the woman you know of is below.’ — ‘ ’Tis very well, replied Lyfetta, ſhew her into my chamber, and bid her ſtay a little;’ —then turning to her friend, they ſmiled on each other, nodded, winked, and ſeemed big with ſome ſecret between themſelves.

I found by all this, that my preſence might very well be ſpared at this time, ſo turned down my cup and took my leave. As I was going down ſtairs, I heard Lyfetta order herſelf to be denied to whoever ſhould come that evening; which convincing me of what I before had reaſon to imagine, that there was ſomething more than ordinary in hand, I reſolved, if poſſible, to fathom the mystery. Accordingly I went home, popp’d on my Invisible Belt, put my Tablets in my pocket, and returned with all ſpeed. — A lazy footman lolliſg againſt a poſt, with the door wide open behind him,

him, gave me an easy entrance into the house :— I very well knew the situation of Lysetta's chamber, and went directly thither ; but to my great mortification, found the ladies had bolted themselves in, and all I could distinguish of what was doing, for some time, was only the hoarse bass of a loud laugh from Lysetta, and the squeaking treble of a shrill tee-hee from the other.

I stood centinel, however, at the top of the staircase, and at last was happily relieved.—Lysetta opened the door, and call'd to her woman to bring clean cups. — Having gain'd admittance, I soon perceived what they were about :—a coffee-pot upon the table, — the dregs of the liquor it had contained pour'd into a basin,—several cups with more figures on the inside than the outside, and the yet recent circles they had left on being whelmed down on a damask napkin spread on one corner of the table, presently informed me they were employed in the art and mystery of conjuration. The priestess of these farcical rights was a mean-habited, ill-look'd woman, and though not old, had her nose saddled with a pair of spectacles, almost as big as the tops of the cups she pretended to inspect : she was placed between the two ladies, who seem'd to treat her with the greatest marks of freedom and civility.

Lysetta, I found, had been so complaisant to her friend, as to let her be first served ; but it was now her own turn, and fresh cups being brought, and the coffee-oracle having judiciously pour'd the quantity of a tea-spoonful into each, the lady took it into her hand, threw out the liquor, whelmed it on the cloth, and turned it round three times. All being concluded, the prophetess took up the first with the most solemn air, look'd stedfastly into it, then on Lysetta, and after having repeated

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this several times, at last delivered her predictions in these terms :

Fortune-teller. I see a ring, madam ; your ladyship will be married.

Lysetta. 'Tis rather a mourning-ring ; some of my kindred or friends perhaps may die.

Fortune-teller. I can say nothing to that, madam, as yet : — but I am positive here is a wedding-ring, a heart just by it, and a little farther there is a great house with a high wall and a pair of gates ; — your ladyship will have some gentleman that has a fine seat in the country ; — it looks almost like a castle.

Lysetta. I know nothing of it ; but what else do you see ?

Fortune-teller. Here is a man, madam, that seems to bring you money ; — here are papers too, I do not know but they may be bills.

Lysetta. Very likely ; for I expect my banker here either to-day or to morrow.

Fortune-teller. Then here is a bundle of something brought to your ladyship's house.

Lysetta. Oh, that is a new sack I have making : —but is there nothing more ?

Fortune-teller. Not in this cup, madam ; —but I will look into the next.

Lysetta. Do, for you have told me nothing of any consequence.

Fortune-teller. There is a great deal here, madam, I can perceive already ; here is a gentleman sitting in an easy chair, leaning his elbow upon the table, and seems to be in a deep study.

• *Lysetta.* Pish,—what's this to me ?

Fortune-teller. Yes, madam, it is a great deal to you ; for here is your ladyship, and the very same gentleman upon his knees before you : —you turn your head away, and look a little scornful ; but he has you by the hand. — Bless me ! here you are both.

both together again, he is talking very earnestly to you; — I never saw any thing so plain; — your ladyship may see it yourself.

In speaking these last words, she held the cup to Lysetta, and with a pin pointed out the eyes, the nose, and mouth of the pretended figure; but Lysetta pushed it from her, and said,

Lysetta. I could never see any thing in a cup in my life:—what sort of a man is he?

Fortune-teller. Pretty tall, madam, well-shap'd, very genteel, has a fair complexion, and somewhat of a languishment in his eyes.

Lysetta. I cannot recollect that I know any man who answers this description.

Fortune-teller. I scarce think you do, madam, at present; but your ladyship may take my word for it, that you will see and be courted by such a one; for there is a figure of three over his head, — it must be either in three days, or three weeks at farthest;—let me consider;—aye,—the moon was at the full yesterday; — this event must happen before she enters into her last quarter; —but the next cup, it may be, will shew it more clearly.

With this she took up the third cup, and had no sooner just looked into it, than she set it down again, clapp'd her hands together, and cry'd out,

Fortune-teller. Bless me! now I am positive your ladyship will very soon be married; here is an altar, a book upon it, and a parson, all as exact as if they were drawn by a pencil.

She then took up the cup again, and perceiving Lysetta began to look a little more serious than she had done, went on in this manner:

Fortune-teller. Well—this is wonderful indeed; —of all the cups I ever turn'd in my life, I never saw any thing like this;—here is your ladyship hand in hand with that said gentleman who I told

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you was in the other: — I would now swear that your ladyship will be a wife before any one imagines you have any thoughts that way.

Lysetta. I have a very good opinion of your skill, yet I am certain you are mistaken in this prediction; for, to tell you the truth, I am resolved never to marry.

Fortune-teller. Your ladyship may resolve what you please; but if the stars resolve the contrary, all your resolutions will come to nothing: — madam, there is no resisting fate; this gentleman is ordained to be your husband; and how much soever you may set yourself against it, the decrees of destiny are inevitable, and you must submit.

Lysetta. Oh, Heaven! whether I will or not?

Fortune-teller. Undoubtedly, madam; — there is no withstanding the Superior Powers, and those things which we think the farthest removed from us, are frequently the most near at hand; so that design what you will, resolve what you will, it is all in vain; your ladyship is ordained to be a wife, and the gentleman I see in these cups must be your husband.

Lysetta. Well, if such a thing should come to pass, shall I be happy?

Fortune-teller. There is nothing in the cup, madam, that shews the contrary.

The cups having been all examined, the prophets, after receiving a handsome gratuity for her trouble, took her leave, and left Lysetta and her fair companion to reason between themselves on the wonders of her art: — but my Crystalline Remembrance being now quite full, it is not in my power to relate the particulars of their discourse; and can only say, that they both seemed to give an implicit credit to every thing she had pretended to reveal.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

Presents the Reader with a very foolish Adventure of Lysetta's, to which all that was contained in the preceding Chapter was only a Prelude.

HAVING discovered this folly in Lysetta, which before I could never have imagined, I began now to be censorious enough to suspect she might be also guilty of others, and therefore took it into my head to make her some invisible visits, at those hours in which it was likely her behaviour was most unguarded. In order to satisfy my curiosity, I went one morning, and found her busy in looking over some new pamphlets just sent her by her bookseller. As I always thought the most certain way to form a true judgment of a woman's mind, was, in knowing what sort of reading she most delighted in, I was glad to perceive that this lady made choice of only such books as shewed her neither a wanton or a coquette, and returned all those by which their titles discovered the least tendency to prophaneness or obscenity. After this, she began to open the leaves of one of them; but before she had gone through half the leaves it contained, was interrupted by her footman, who brought her a letter, and said, the person waited for an answer:— I slipped behind the chair while she broke the seal, and the contents were as follow:

To the honourable LYSETTA.

‘ May it please your Ladyship,

‘ MADAM,

‘ I Hope your goodness will pardon the liberty
‘ a stranger takes in writing to you; but as I am

B 5

‘ not

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‘ not so fortunate as to be acquainted with any
 ‘ person who can introduce me to your ladyship, I
 ‘ am obliged to become my own solicitor, and
 ‘ most humbly request you will allow me the pri-
 ‘ vilege of waiting on you this afternoon, if no
 ‘ previous engagement intervenes between me and
 ‘ my desires, having something to communicate
 ‘ of the utmost moment to the peace of him who
 ‘ has the honour to be, with the most profound
 ‘ respect,

‘ Your ladyship’s sincerely devoted servant,

‘ ORSAMES.’

Lysetta seemed a good deal confounded on read-
 ing this little epistle; and, after pausing a while,
 argued with herself in this manner: ‘ Good God!
 ‘ if this should be the man the fortune-teller told
 ‘ me of! she said, I should hear or see something
 ‘ of him within three days, and this is but the
 ‘ second since the prediction:—if I was sure he
 ‘ was the person she mentioned, I think I ought
 ‘ not to give him leave to visit me, at least not on
 ‘ his first requesting it;—yet, I should be glad,
 ‘ methinks, to see if he any ways answers the de-
 ‘ scription she gave of him:—besides, if I should
 ‘ refuse him, some accident or another would
 ‘ bring us together; for it is certain, there is no
 ‘ such thing as disappointing Fate;—Why there-
 ‘ fore should I keep myself in suspense?—no, I
 ‘ will see him, and hear what he has to say;—
 ‘ it may be, he may come upon some other busi-
 ‘ ness than what I imagine, and then it would
 ‘ be vastly silly in me to avoid him.—Whoever
 ‘ he is, or whatever his designs are, it can be of
 ‘ no prejudice to see him once;—he cannot run
 ‘ away with me, — cannot have me against my
 ‘ will.’

She

She then called her servant, and bid him say that she should be at home. The fellow ran down, but had scarce time to deliver the message he was charged with, before she repented of it, as may be seen by this exclamation: 'Lord! what have I done! if he is really the person I take him to be, he must think me strangely forward in so easily granting him admittance.'

While she was speaking this, she ran to the stair-case with an intent to retract what she had said; but a second thought with-holding her, she turned back into the room, and cried out, 'What a fool I am! — he does not know that. I have consulted a fortune-teller, nor that I have any reason to guess at the business that brings him hither; — Why therefore should I shun him? — What shame can my seeing him reflect upon me? — it will be time enough to forbid his visits, when he has declared himself my lover.'

How long she would have continued in that mind, is uncertain; — two ladies came in that instant, to desire her company with them to the Park, being a fine morning; to which she consenting, I left them, and went home, but with a full resolution to return in the afternoon, and see what event the expected interview would produce. Accordingly I put on my belt of Invisibilty, and went to the house of Lysetta; — I saw a chair waiting, but the door was shut, and I was obliged to stay in the street a considerable time, before it was opened for any person, either to go in or out. I got entrance at last, and passed directly to the dining-room, where I found the person I was desirous of beholding. On my looking earnestly on him, I saw he had so much the resemblance of the picture drawn for him by the fortune-teller, that I presently perceived she must

be better acquainted with his features than the cups could make her, and that in reality she was a marriage-broker, under the disguise of a coffee-grounds calculator. He had placed himself very close to Lysetta on a settee, and must have been making a declaration of love to her by the answer she gave just as I came into the room.

Lysetta. Sir, it does not become me to hearken to any professions of this nature, from a person to whose family, fortune, and character, I am so an entire stranger.

Orsames. It will be easy for me, madam, to give you full satisfaction in all these particulars ; but till I can do so, I beg you will permit me, at least, to convince you of my passion.

Lysetta. Though, Sir, there is no room to doubt either by your appearance or behaviour, but that you are a gentleman, and a man of honour, yet I should be glad, methinks, to know some one person with whom you are acquainted.

Orsames. Unfortunately for me, madam, there is not a soul in this town who can give any account of me : — this, perhaps, you will think odd ; but permit me to give a short sketch of my history, and you will cease to wonder at it.

Lysetta. Then, pray sir, oblige me so far.

Orsames. It is no boast in me, madam, to assure your ladyship, that my family is among the number of the most ancient in England, having been settled here long before the Conquest, and many of them been bishops, judges, and privy counsellors ; but my father taking some disgust at the measures in a late reign, resolved to quit his native country for ever ; and to that end sold the seat of his ancestors, with a very considerable estate in Somersetshire, and carried the purchase money, together with his whole family, to Philadelphia, where he had then a brother, reputed the most wealthy merchant in
that

that place ; — it was there, madam, I was born, and am the only surviving issue of my parents, and consequently the sole heir of their possessions, as also of my uncle's, he dying without leaving any child behind him. — I fear I tire you, madam.

Lysetta. No, sir, I beg you will go on.

Orfames. From my very infancy there was something in my nature which could not relish the manners of these Americans, tho' born amongst them ; — I had read a great deal, and heard much concerning England, and had always a passionate desire to come to it ; but my father, even after my arriving at maturity, would never listen to any intreaties on that score : — after his death, my uncle was no less averse to my removal ; but on his demise, finding myself freed from all dependency, and entirely master of my own actions, I left all my effects to be disposed of by a person whose integrity I am well assured of, and taking with me only a thousand guineas, just for present use, embarked in the first ship that sailed for England, where I happily arrived about six weeks since.

Lysetta. But would it not have been better, sir, that you had staid at Philadelphia till your affairs had been settled ?

Orfames. Not at all, madam ; I have friends there that will manage for me as well as if I were there in person ; — besides, an irresistible impulse hurried me to England : — I could not then account for my impatience, but am now convinced it was my guardian angel called me to behold in reality that lovely face I have so often seen in dreams. *

Lysetta. What ! dream of me !

Orfames. Yes, madam ; though so many leagues distant, my spirit has been often with you, conversed with you, and avowed that flame my mortal part now feels.

Lysetta.

Lysetta. Is it possible !

Orfames. True, by Heaven !

Lysetta. And are you certain I am the same you saw in your sleep ?

Orfames. I could not be deceived : the first moment my eyes were blest with your presence at the Chapel Royal, I forgot the solemnity of the place, and the pious business that had brought me thither.

Lysetta. 'Tis very wonderful ; — but 'tis time enough to talk of these things. — As you have related to me the former part of your life, I should like to know in what manner you intend to regulate the future.

Orfames. That must be submitted to my charming directress : — all my affairs, as well as my heart, must henceforth be at your disposal : — I had thoughts, indeed, of purchasing a small estate, of about fifteen hundred, or two thousand pounds a-year ; — but whether I should put the remainder of my fortune into the public funds, or lay it out on an employment at court, I had not yet determined.

Lysetta. Oh, by all means, buy a place : — the court is the only thing upon earth.

Orfames. Next to your company, I believe it is ; and since you approve the thought, shall infallibly pursue it.

Lysetta. Whoever you marry, sir, will doubtless be of my opinion.

Orfames. Ah ! do not wrong my faithful heart so much, as to imagine it capable of being charmed by any other. — No, if all my love, my services, my prayers, should fail to move the adorable *Lysetta*, I vow an eternal celibacy.

Lysetta. You men always talk thus when you would impose on the credulity of our sex : — but, sir, it is time alone that is the true touch-stone of sincerity.

Orfames.

Orsames. Madam, it is, and to that I shall trust the decision of my fate : — therefore, I once more implore your permission to repeat my vows, and pay you the tribute which beauty like yours demands from love like mine.

Lysetta. I will not hear so much of love ; but as you are a stranger in town, and as yet have no acquaintance, I cannot be so ungentle to refuse you the privilege of visiting me sometimes.

At these words he threw himself on his knees, and catching hold of both her hands, pressed first the one and then the other to his lips, with the greatest appearance of transport ; all which she suffered, nor discovered the least reluctance. — I know not how long he might have continued in this mute courtship, if the sound of somebody at the door had not obliged him suddenly to rise. It was Lysetta's servant, who immediately entered and presented her with two letters, which had been just left by the post : — she looked on the superscriptions, then threw them carelessly on the table, without shewing any impatience to examine the contents ; but her lover, either thro' politeness, or because he had acted enough of his part for the first time, thought proper to take his leave, saying, he would do himself the honour of waiting on her the next day.

He was no sooner gone, than she began to give a loose to those agitations his presence and discourse had occasioned, and which she had not without great difficulty restrained from being visible. It was in these terms she expressed herself, which, incoherent as they are, I shall deliver to my readers, just as I found them the next morning engraved on my tablets. ‘ Well, this is the oddest accident ! sure there was never any thing so astonishing ! — Let people say what they will, there is a great deal in the throwing of a cup, —
‘ that

‘ that woman is certainly the devil : — how exactly
 ‘ she described this gentleman ! — I have said, I
 ‘ would never marry, but if the stars have ordain’d
 ‘ it otherwise, it is in vain to resist ; and, if his
 ‘ fortune be such as he pretends it is, I can see no
 ‘ cause for any one to blame me.’

Here she stopped, and fell into a little reverie ;
 but soon coming out of it, thus renewed her ejacu-
 lations : ‘ There is nothing in the person nor ad-
 ‘ dress of this new lover, but what is perfectly
 ‘ agreeable ; and, I believe, I shall like him well
 ‘ enough on a little more acquaintance with him :
 ‘ he seems vastly charmed with me ; but one ought
 ‘ not to build on what the men say on these occa-
 ‘ sions. — There is something strangely particular,
 ‘ indeed, in his dreaming of me without ever
 ‘ having seen me : — in fine, the more I consider,
 ‘ the more I find the hand of fate is in this busi-
 ‘ ness, and I must submit.’

After this, she seemed somewhat more composed,
 and began to read the letters she had received : —
 I also look’d over them at the same time ; but found
 they were only from relations of family affairs of no
 moment to the public, or to the narrative I am re-
 citing. When I came home, had thrown myself
 into an easy-chair, and began to ruminate on the
 extraordinary scene I had been witness of, I knew
 not whether the base design, which I now plainly
 perceived had been concerted between the Fortune-
 teller and Orsames, or the weakness and insatiation
 of Lysetta, in giving credit to their romantic lies,
 had the most right to engross my amazement. But
 when I reflected more deeply on the various impos-
 sibilities I daily saw practised, my wonder ceased, on
 account either of the fortune-teller, or the fortune-
 hunter, and fixed it entirely on the simplicity of
 Lysetta. It now seemed not strange to me, that
 the most illiterate and abject wretches should be en-
 dowed

dowed with a natural store of cunning, which, backed by impudence, renders them capable of forming contrivances to deceive ; else how do we often see pickpockets and house-breakers circumvent the watchfulness of the most cautious ? But then those sort of pilferers rob us when our heads are turned another way, or when we are sleeping in our beds : but in listening to fortune-tellers, we are defrauded with our eyes open, and give, as it were, our own consent to the worst kind of theft, that of stealing away our understanding.

People guilty of this egregious folly, when detected in it, pretend they consult those ridiculous oracles for no other end than merely to divert themselves, without believing, or even remembering one syllable of the predictions delivered to them. This, may, perhaps, at first be true ; but there are too many instances which prove, that custom, by degrees, turns into earnest what might once be meant as a jest. The reason is this : Those subtle creatures frequently find means, either by emissaries, or by insinuating themselves among servants, to get into the secrets of families, and one real fact serving to make all they say believed, gives them the power to work the person who depends upon them almost to any point they aim at. The most pernicious designs have been carried on this way.—Husbands have been set against their wives, and wives against their husbands ; — parents have been made to disregard their children, and children to forget all obedience to their parents ; — the best matches have been broke off, and the most disproportionable ones made : — in a word, there is no kind of mischief but what has happened when a fortune-teller has been bribed by some base person, who has an interest in bringing about such events. Therefore, as there is a strict law in force against these pretended dealers in futurity, I cannot help saying, that

that I regret its not being executed with greater punctuality; since the more simple an evil appears, the more dangerous it proves in its effects.



CHAP. IV.

Contains the Catastrophe of an Affair, which the Repetition of ought not to give Offence to any one, except the Person whose Resentment the Author will not look upon as a Misfortune.

LYSETTA was so strongly persuaded in her mind, that it was her fate to marry Orfames, that she made not the least attempt to check the growing inclination she had for him, but rather thought it a virtue in her to encourage the most tender sentiments for a person ordained by heaven to be her husband. I made several visits to her, both in my Visible and Invisible capacity, and seldom went without finding Orfames there, and every time more free and dégagée than before. — He made so swift a progress in his courtship, that in less than a month, he became the Major-Domo of her family, commanded all the servants, and behaved as if already their master. To add to all this, Lysetta suffered him to conduct her to all public places, sat in the same box at the play-house, and always dined and supped with her, whatever company were there:—in a word, they were never asunder, but in those hours when decency obliged them to be so.

So strange a revolution in the behaviour of Lysetta made a great noise in the town: all her acquaintance were surprized; all her friends and kindred were much alarmed at it; especially as the person to whom she shewed these extraordinary favour, was altogether unknown, nor could they

get the least account of him. Those who, either through a long friendship or affinity of blood, could take the privilege of discoursing with her on this head, did it in a very free manner; but the answers she gave to their interrogatories were far from being satisfactory. When she told them his history, as he had related it, they treated it with contempt: — some said that he was an impostor; — others, more modest, that they wish'd he was not so: — to both which she returned, that whatever he were, she was certain it was her fate to marry him, and desired they would give themselves no pain on that occasion. As she was naturally of a haughty obstinate disposition, it is highly probable, that the remonstrances they took the liberty of making to her, rather strengthened than abated her resolution of giving herself to him. I was at her house one day, under cover of my Invisible Belt, when I heard the following conversation between them:

Orsames. Condemn me not, my angel, for being sometimes melancholy even in your presence: — though you have promised to make me one day the happiest of mankind, and I look upon every word of that dear mouth, as unfailing as an oracle, yet when I consider the length of time between me and the consummation of my wishes, the impatience of my passion will not permit me to be gay.

Lysetta. You men are always in such a hurry in every thing you do.

Orsames. Ah, madam, 'tis a dreadful thing to have one's happiness depend on the uncertain winds and waves; it may be yet two months before my effects can arrive from Philadelphia.

Lysetta. And do you call that so long a time?

Orsames. A million of ages in the account of love; and even, according to common calculation, longer than human nature can sustain continual torments;

torments; — eight whole weeks, six and fifty anxious days, and as many restless nights; — upwards of thirteen hundred hours of tedious expectation; and minutes almost numberless, wasted in pain, which might be passed in pleasure, if you would shorten the tremendous date.

Lysetta. What would you have me do?

Orsames. Ah! if you loved, you need not be told, but of yourself generously bring the blessed event nearer to my wishes.

Lysetta. You would not have me marry 'till your affairs are settled, and things can be done to our mutual satisfaction.

Orsames. I understand you, madam; the articles of jointure and pin-money, I know, are customary in modish marriages; but the passion you have inspired me with is of too sublime a nature to stoop to such mean forms. I ask not what your fortune is, but will settle the whole of mine upon you; — your lovely person is all the treasure I am ambitious of preserving; — the rest shall be at your disposal.

Lysetta. This is kind indeed; but more than I desire, or would accept of.

Orsames. Oh! that you had no other fortune than your beauty; — then would the sincerity of my love be proved, by endowing you with all that Heaven has made me master of. — Alas! you know not how ardently, how faithfully I adore you.

Lysetta. Yes, I am vain enough to think I have some share in your affections.

Orsames. Some share! — oh! could you be sensible of the thousandth part of what I feel, pity, if not love, would compel you to ease my throbbing heart of the suspense it labours under, and you would give yourself to my burning, bleeding passion.

Lysetta.

Lysetta. I have already said I will be yours, and now again repeat it.

Orfames. But when, my angel?

In speaking these words, he threw himself upon his knees before her, burst into a flood of well-dissembled tears, and grasped her Robe de Chambre with agonies which I cannot but say had much the appearance of reality, while in these terms he prosecuted his design:

Orfames. I have 'till now supported life but in the rapturous hope of being one day blessed in your possession: but even hope by its uncertainty becomes at last too weak an aid; and soon, very soon, my adorable Lysetta, will you behold your faithful lover a cold breathless corpse, unless the balm of your kindness recruits the vital lamp, and gives fresh vigour to my depressed and breaking heart.

Lysetta. I cannot bear to hear and see you thus:—rise, sir, this posture does not become the man whom I intend to make my husband.

Orfames. No, by Heaven, I never will quit your feet but with an assurance of my happiness.—Say then,—oh! say, when shall be the blissful day that makes you mine!

Lysetta. Since it must be so, even when you please. No, hold, I had forgot myself.

Orfames. Oh, Heavens! what now?

Lysetta. I promised a clergyman, my near kinsman, that if ever I married, he should perform the ceremony: he is at present out of town, but will return next Sunday, and on the Tuesday following, it shall not be my fault if we do not attend him at the altar.

Orfames. Extatic sound!—may I depend on the performance of this heavenly promise!

Lysetta. You may, and be entirely easy on that point; take now my hand, as an earnest of my
having

giving it you in a more solemn manner before a parson : — henceforward I shall look upon myself as yours.

Orfames. Angel! Goddess! thus then let me seal the covenant on those charming lips that have pronounced it.

Lysetta. The covenant will not hold good in law without both parties interchangeably sign their assent.

She uttered these words with a most pleasing smile, and at the same time threw her arms about his neck, and returned the passionate salute she had received from him, adding this tender expression : ‘ My dear, dear Orfames, I do not now blush to confess to you, that from the first moment you declared yourself my lover, my heart corresponded with your vows, and told me what would be the event.’ He affected too much transport on hearing her speak in this manner, to be able to make any other reply than kisses and embraces, which, as she was far from repelling, or seeming the least offended at, I know not what advantages he might have taken, on finding her thus softened by his artifices, if a sudden interruption had not, happily for her, broke off this dangerous entertainment. A footman came and told her, that her aunt, Lady Gravelove, was come to visit her; on which she cried out with some peevishness, — ‘ Pish — why did you not say I was from home?’ Then turning fondly to Orfames, said,

Lysetta. Do you chuse to join company with my aunt? or shall I fetch some books to amuse you with till she is gone?

Orfames. No, my dearest love; — this lady has always looked upon me with an displeasing eye, especially of late, therefore will not offend her with my pretence; neither are my spirits enough composed, in the excess of joy you have inspired
me

me with, to read any thing with attention ; — so will take a little walk.

Lysetta. Do so, — but I shall expect you back to supper ; — my aunt seldom stays longer than to drink tea, and I am sure, I shall not press her at this time.

No more was said on either side ; they embraced and parted ; she went into the next room, and he down stairs, in order to go where his business or inclination called him. As I never believed this fellow was what he pretended, I had taken some pains to discover the truth of his circumstances, but without any success, till it now came into my mind to follow him, after he had left Lysetta's house ; which I did, resolving not to lose sight of him till he should return to her again.

He went directly to Drury Lane, walked very fast, and never stopped till he came to the entrance of a narrow passage, between that place and Wild-street, where he stood still, and looked round him, as I suppose, to see if any one was near who might know him ; for the day was not yet quite shut in ; — then passed a little farther, looked about him again, and finding the coast, as he thought, clear, none being in the alley but his invisible attendant, slipped hastily into a little dirty alehouse, where an old woman met him, and told him, his friends were all above ; on which he ran up stairs, and pushed open the door of a room, pretty spacious indeed, but had otherwise all the signs of beggary and wretchedness about it. Here we found five or six men, tolerably well habited, but had something in their countenances which made me guess their occupation, before they discovered it by their conversation ; for they were no better than a gang of thieves and sharpers : — they were sitting round a table, with a great bowl of punch before them, when Orsames rushed

rushed in, and with a gay air accosted them in these terms :

Orfames. With me joy, my lads, my hearts of steel, with me joy ; — I have gained my point ; all is over, i' faith.

First Man. What married !

Orfames. No, but as good as married : — the wench and her twelve thousand pounds are as sure to me as if I had one in my arms and the other in my pocket ; — Tuesday is the day, my buffs ; but I must have more money, by G — ! I have not a single doit left.

Second Man. How ! all the fifty pieces gone already ?

Orfames. Ay, faith, and well laid out too : — I shall return it with interest ; — you are all to share in the money, and the woman too. — But come, — how stands stock among you ?

Third Man. Curled low ; — tho' we have been all out to-day, we have not collected above thirty pieces, and four gold watches that must be knock'd to pieces, and the cases melted down, or the makers names may betray us.

Fourth Man. The road grows worse and worse every day, I think.

Orfames. But did you get nothing from the ladies the fortune-teller told you were to take the air this morning on Barnes Common ?

Fifth Man. I should have done so ; but as the devil would have it, just as they were going to pull out their purses, three gentlemen with fire-arms came galloping towards us, and obliged me to make off without my booty.

Orfames. 'Twas damn'd unlucky.

First Man. One meets with a thousand such disappointments : — for my part, I am half sick of the business, and so I believe we are all.

Second

Second Man. Ay, faith; for what with seeing inn-keepers, coachmen, fortune-tellers, and other such necessary informers, we have the least part of the profit to ourselves.

Third Man. Ay, I wish, Orsames, you were once married, that you might set up a gaming-table under the sanction of your lady's name; — gaming is ten times a more profitable, as well as a more safe way of thieving.

Orsames. You know it was my bargain, and you may depend upon my honour, that it shall be the first thing I will do.

Fourth Man. It will be a joyful day; for since taxes have been so high, and trade so low, such numbers of shop-keepers are obliged to take the road, that we old practitioners can scarce get a living by it.

Orsames. Well, well, all this will be over in a short time; — but you must raise me some cash; — I can easily give you an account of the fifty pieces.

Fifth Man. No, no, it needs not; we know you would not sink upon us.

Orsames. I chuse however to do it: — the first article is five guineas to the fortune-teller, as an earnest of the hundred she is to receive after my marriage with Lysetta: — the second is twenty pounds for a gold snuff-box, which I pretended to have brought from Philadelphia and presented to her ladyship: — the third is about ten more, spent in three several jaunts I made with her to Richmond, Windsor, and Greenwich: — the remainder, you may believe, might well be spent in donations to her servants, board-wages to my own man, paying my lodgings at two guineas a-week, chair-hire, and other such necessary expences.

First Man. You could do no less.

Second Man. Ay, ay, — nothing of all this could have been spared. — But what sum do you demand at present?

Orfames. I believe twenty pieces will defray the whole charges of the wedding, which is all I want; and afterwards, my boys, I shall have enough for you all.

On this, every one turned out his pockets, and the sum requested was immediately made up, and laid upon the table, which Orfames put into his purse; and then some discourse ensued among this vicious company which I chuse to pass over in silence, as it would be no fit entertainment for the chaste ears of my fair readers. Orfames staid with them about two hours, and then took his leave, in order to sup with Lysetta, as she had desired he would; — I accompanied him not thither, but went home to my own apartment, more full of confusion at the discovery I had made than I am able to express. — Though I half despised Lysetta for the follies I had seen her guilty of, yet when I reflected on her birth, and the character she maintained in the world, I could not bear the thoughts of her becoming the victim of the base design concerted against her; and her fortune, reputation, and eternal peace of mind, the prey of such a nest of villains.

My whole study was now fully bent to snatch this unfortunate lady from that gulph of perdition she was upon the brink of, and so near plunging into. I was extremely divided in my thoughts what to do upon this occasion: to give her any hints concerning the dangers to which she exposed herself and reputation, by encouraging the addresses of a man whose character she was so little acquainted with, I knew would be in vain, as she had rejected all the warnings given her on that score, and refused to listen to the admonitions of her best friends
and

and nearest kindred. — I had it in my power, indeed, to inform her of much more than any of them could even guess at; but then I could not relate the scene I had been witness of, without discovering at the same time the secret of my Invisible Belt, which was by no means proper for me to entrust her with.

To acquaint her by letter with what I knew concerning Orfames, and the villainous conspiracy that had been formed to ruin her, I feared would be to little purpose; and doubted not but she would look upon an anonymous intimation only as a piece of malice, and treat it with the contempt it might seem to merit: — as this, however, was the only method I could take to save her, with any convenience to myself, I resolved to pursue it; and accordingly wrote to her next morning a full account of all I had been witness of between Orfames and his wicked companions. I made this letter be left at her house before the time in which she usually got out of bed, to the end she might have leisure to consider the contents, without being interrupted by any company coming in. As I was desirous of seeing in what manner she would receive this intelligence, I went under cover of my Belt, and gained entrance just as she had finished the perusal.

Her behaviour was such as I apprehended it would be; — she tore the letter, — stormed, and cried out, ‘ Was there ever so much impudence? ‘ Sure, the person who sent this infamous scrawl ‘ must have a very mean opinion of my understanding to think I could give the least credit ‘ to such a vile aspersion! — Orfames an impostor! a companion for thieves and vagabonds! ‘ — ridiculous!’ — And then again: ‘ This must ‘ certainly be a contrivance of some of my wife ‘ kindred to break off the match: — I could find

‘ in my heart to send for Orsames and marry him
 ‘ this instant, to shew how much I despise their
 ‘ little malice; — but ’tis no matter, Tuesday will
 ‘ soon arrive, and that will put an end to all.’

I staid a whole hour, in the supposition that Orsames would make her a morning visit; but finding by some discourse she had with her maid, that she did not expect him, and was making herself ready to go among the shops for things she wanted, I quitted her apartment, much disconcerted at the ill success of what I had done. However, as I had little else to employ my time that day, I went again in the afternoon; Orsames was now there, and two ladies of Lysetta’s particular acquaintance: — whether she had mentioned any thing to him of the letter, I cannot be certain, but am apt to think she had not, for he appeared with an alertness, which, by all I could discover, had nothing of constraint in it. Cards were called for, and they were just going to sit down to whist, when word was brought Lysetta, that her cousin, Capt. Platoon, was just arrived from Carlisle, and come to wait upon her; on which she ordered him to be shewed up immediately. Orsames, who, I perceived, had turned pale as ashes on hearing this gentleman’s name, now rose hastily from his chair, and said to Lysetta, ‘ I have just thought of some business I had to dispatch; — your ladyship must excuse me; — the affair that calls me is of consequence; — I cannot stay.’

She was going to make some reply, but the Captain came that instant into the room; — while he was paying his compliments to his cousin and the other ladies, Orsames had taken up his hat, and was endeavouring to slip out unperceived; but the quick-sightedness of Lysetta prevented him; — she ran to him, and catching hold of his sleeve, said, ‘ You shall not go, at least, till I have pre-
 ‘ sented

‘ sented you to my cousin.’ Then turning to the captain, said, ‘ This is a gentleman, cousin, whose acquaintance, I believe, you will hereafter think yourself happy in.’

On this, the captain advanced with great politeness to embrace the person his kinswoman presented to him, but had no sooner fixed his eyes upon his face, than he started back with the utmost astonishment, and cried out to Lysetta : — ‘ What is the meaning of this, madam ? — Whom would you introduce to me ?’ She was opening her mouth to make some answer ; but Orsames, who was drawing as fast as he could towards the door, hindered her from speaking, by saying, with a hesitating voice : ‘ Madam, — the gentleman does not seem to desire any new acquaintance ; — I will wait on your ladyship another time.’ In speaking this he got to the top of the stair-case, and, it is likely, would have made but one step to the bottom, if the captain had not prevented him, by running to him, and, catching fast hold of him by the collar, dragged him back, saying at the same time ; ‘ No, rascal, you must not think to leave this place till you have confessed what devil gave you the impudence to introduce yourself into such company, and on what villainous design you are thus disguised in the habit of a gentleman.’ Then addressing himself to Lysetta, who stood as motionless as if transfixed with thunder, went on thus : ‘ Madam, by what means soever this villain has imposed upon you, I do assure you, upon my honour, that two months ago he was a private man in Capt. Cutcomb’s company, and drummed out of the regiment for pig-stealing, and other misdemeanors ; for some of which, indeed, he ought to have been hanged.’

On these words Lysetta screamed out, — ‘ Oh ! Heavens !’ — and fell into a swoon ; — the

captain seeing this, quitted his prisoner to run with the two ladies to her assistance; and Orsames took the opportunity of making his escape. Proper means being applied, she soon recovered, and the swelling passions which had occasioned this disorder, vented themselves in tears: — the captain appeared a little impatient to know how she became acquainted with such a wretch as Orsames; but she told him, she was not then in a condition to inform him of the particulars; — said, she was very ill, and must lie down, and desired to see him another time; — on which he took his leave, as did the two ladies, who knowing Orsames had professed himself her lover, and the encouragement she had given him, I could perceive smiled within themselves at the discovery. Thus was Lysetta preserved from ruin, and had no other punishment for her folly, than being laughed at by those who were privy to the affair. — As for Orsames, I have since met him about town in a very shabby and tattered condition; the gang of villains, his associates, I believe, are dispersed, and one of them has made his exit at Tyburn.



C H A P. V.

Treats on various Matters, some of which, the Author dares venture to assure the Public, will hereafter be found not only more entertaining, but also of more Consequence than at present they appear to be.

I HAD been told, that Lady Playfield's route was an assemblage of the most brilliant and polite persons of both sexes; and tho' I never had any great opinion of this sort of meetings, yet I was tempted to go thither, in order to be myself a witness.

nests how far the description that had been given me was consonant to truth. As I am an entire stranger to her ladyship, and did not care for the formality of being introduced by any one who went there, I chose to make this visit in my Invisible capacity. The great number of wax tapers, the sparkle of the ladies jewels, and the extraordinary beauty of some among them, was dazzling to my eyes at first entrance; but I soon found, that I had the same fault to find with this as I had done in all other mixed company I ever saw;—a kind of hurry and confusion, which destroys that solid conversation that is to agreeable when only a few select friends are met together. It was very near nine o'clock when I went thither, yet there were several who came in after me:—Lady Playfield received all of them with her accustomed politeness; but for a great while there was nothing in the salutation on either side which engrossed my attention so far as to make me spread my Tablets to retain it.

I was indeed quite indolent to every thing that was said, till the entrance of Lady Allmode gave a little spur to my curiosity:—I had heard much talk of this lady, not only for her being extravagantly fond of every new fashion, but also for a certain peculiarity in her manner of conversation, which made her admired by people of a low education, and as much laughed at by those of a superior. I had been told, that she had an utter aversion to plain English, and so thorough a contempt for what she called the vulgar way of speaking, that, when she talked, even on the most common things, she interlarded all she said with the hardest words she could pick out of the dictionary, and frequently coined new ones of her own which never were, nor scarce ever will be, found in any vocabulary. Lady Playfield, I perceived, received her with a great deal of respect;—I was then at some di-

stance, but, on finding they were entering into conversation, drew more near, to have an opportunity of hearing and improving myself, by a person of whom so extraordinary a description had been given me. After the first compliments were over, Lady Playfield addressed herself to her in these words:

Lady Playfield. Tho' I am always happy when I see your ladyship, yet now I can scarce forbear complaining of your unkindness in coming without Miss Arabella;—I hear she has been in town above a week.

Lady Allmode. I could not have been guilty of so enormous a solecism in good breeding as not to have brought her to pay her duty to your ladyship, if there had been a possibility in nature to have done it.

Lady Playfield. I hope Miss is well, madam.

Lady Allmode. Perfectly so, madam, as to her health; but such a sight, such a figure! a greater metamorphosis than any in Ovid.

Lady Playfield. What does your ladyship mean?

Lady Allmode. Oh, madam, the remotest corner of the most desert of the three Arabias never produced such a creature, such a Tramontane, as the Italians elegantly phrase it. Well, these people who live a great way from London are such absurdians, such awkwardities. Would your ladyship believe it, they sent the girl home in a cap that quite covered the drum of her ears?

Lady Playfield. That might be to prevent her catching cold in the coach.

Lady Allmode. Oh, Jupiter! how am I surprized to hear your ladyship talk in this manner! But this is not all, the girl had several new suits of cloaths when she left London, made in the genteelest taste; but my country aunt taking it into her head, that we either had allowed too scanty a pattern, or that she had outgrown them, out of mere good-will and simplicity,

simplicity, has lengthened all her petticoats to such a ridiculous size, that they almost come down to the buckles of her shoes;—I protest one can scarce see whether she has any ancles.

On this, a gentleman who stood pretty near approached Lady Allmode, and with a most ironical tone replied to what she had said in these words:

Gentleman. Your ladyship must excuse the mistake your aunt has made; I fancy the fashion of going half naked may not yet have reached so far as Wales.

Lady Allmode. You certainly speak the rationale of the thing, sir;—few of these mountaineers regard any thing but loading their tables with provisions, feasting their tenants, paying their debts, standing up for the liberties of their country, and such-like antiquated obsolete customs;—for my part, all my faculties are immersed in a profundity of astonishment, to think that my aunt could marry and settle among such aliens to politeness, such heathens to the laws of good breeding and the drawing-room.

Gentleman. Perhaps, madam, the customs and manners you mention were in vogue at the time of your aunt's marriage.

Lady Allmode. I protest, sir, you have hit upon the solution of this enigma;—it was, indeed, in the reign of Queen Anne that she married.

I had seen enough of this fine lady, and did not chuse to have my tablets crowded with any more of her unintelligible jargon, so retired to another part of the room, where I saw three ladies got together, who seemed very earnest in discourse; but little was I like to be the better for my near approach, for being on the topic of scandal, each was so full, and so highly delighted with the thoughts of it, that all speaking at the same time prevented me from hearing distinctly what was said by any

of them; and all I could gather at last was, that a certain lady of their acquaintance had been caught with her footman.

As I had been informed of the particulars of this story before, the foible of the transgressing fair did not so much engross my meditations as the pleasure of those of her own sex seemed to take in exposing it; and I could not help saying to myself with the poet :

There is a lust in man no charm can tame,
Of loudly publishing his neighbour's shame.
On eagles wings immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born, and die.

But this was a place more proper to collect matter for reflection hereafter, than to indulge it at present; so I passed on among the gaming-tables, which were eleven in number, and none of them unoccupied. Here it was pleasant enough to observe the various attitudes of those who played; and I think there is not a more sure way of judging people's dispositions, than to see them at this diversion: — some of those who swept the stakes, received the favours fortune bestowed on them with an ease and calmness which shewed they had not been over-anxious whether she smiled or frowned; but there were many more who snatched up the glittering metal with a greediness which sufficiently demonstrated, that avarice was the chief excitement to what they did. As for the losers, it gave me an infinite satisfaction to see the unconcerned behaviour of some few among them; while others again filled me with a no less sensible disquiet at their impatience. — I was ashamed to find a gentleman of rank and fortune forget all politeness, and sometimes even common decency, to those who had his money in their pockets; and sorry in my heart to
see

see a lady bite her lips, wrinkle her forehead with unbecoming frowns, distort every feature, and disfigure all the charms that Nature had bestowed on her, for the loss of what was not worth half that anxiety to preserve. — ‘ Good Heaven !’ said I to myself, ‘ if this be the effects of gaming, what madness is it to venture one’s peace in that uncertain gulph !’

The beautiful Ismena was this night among the number of the unfortunates, but not of the impatient : I stood behind her chair, and saw her empty a well-filled purse, and take out of it even the last guinea with a smile. She was, indeed, a young lady lately come to the possession of a very large fortune, and could not want what she had thrown away ; but the same might also be said of Clarinda, who played at the same table with her, and had also lost a considerable sum to Sir Charles Fairlove, with whom these two ladies had been engaged the whole evening at picquet : — but see the difference ; the latter of whom rose from the table in a fury, tore her fan and cry’d,

Clarinda. Curse the cards, I will play no more this night ; — that I am resolved ; — at least not with Sir Charles.

Ismena. Nay, madam, we have no reason to be angry with Sir Charles, for having done by us what we would gladly have done by him ; — for my part, though he has stripped me of all I had about me, I am as good friends with him as ever.

Sir Charles. I hope so, madam ; otherwise the good luck I have had at play would prove the greatest misfortune of my life.

Clarinda. The devil’s in the cards to-night, I think ; — I never lost at picquet in my life before, — and now I have thrown away, — I cannot justly say how much, — but I’ll see.

She then turned to the table, and poured out of a purse what was remaining in it, and having counted the sum, went on in the same heat as before:

Clarinda. Yes, — by Heaven! I thought so! — no less than six and twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. I should be sorry, madam, to give you any disquiet on the score of such a trifle; but I can do no more than offer you a chance for regaining all you have lost: — if you please, I will stake the whole against five of yours.

Clarinda. I should lose that too, I suppose.

Ismena. Venture it, however; if you lose it, I'll be your halves, and send you the money to-morrow morning.

Clarinda. Well then, I will make one more essay.

With these words she sat down again; they played; she was the winner, and now appeared as gay and happy as she had lately been discontented. — Sir Charles smiled with some disdain at this reverse in her humour, and turning to Ismena, said,

Sir Charles. Now, madam, you must take up the winner.

Ismena. You must give me credit then, sir; you both know I have no stake to lay down.

Clarinda. You must excuse me for that, madam, it may turn my luck; besides, one has no heart to play when one does not see the money on the table.

Sir Charles. Well then, beautiful Ismena, I will give you credit; — or if you please, will play upon the square, my honour against yours.

Ismena. With all my heart, Sir Charles.

The ill nature, the ill manners, and indeed the ingratitude of Clarinda, in refusing to give the credit of a stake at cards, to a friend who had just before offered to pay half the losses she would sustain in playing with another, made that young lady as disa-

disagreeable in my eyes, as the sweetness of disposition and generosity of the sprightly Ismena made her charming to a much greater degree than ever she had appeared to me before, — all lovely, as it must be confessed she is; — but to proceed: Ismena having accepted the challenge of Sir Charles, she tried once more what chance would do for her; — chance was still against her, and Sir Charles again the conqueror; the game being over, she said, laughing:

Ismena. Well, I may now sing, — Fortune is my foe, — and content myself, for the remainder of the night, in being an humble spectator, since I am not in a condition to play myself.

Sir Charles. It will be your own fault then, madam, if you are; I believe I have an hundred and some odd pieces about me, which are all at your service.

Ismena. I thank you, Sir Charles; but I do not chuse to risque so much at one sitting: I do not care, however, if I become your debtor for twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. You do me a pleasure, madam, in accepting any part of the offer I made you; — there is the trifle you mention; if you want more, I beg you will command it.

Ismena. No, sir, I am determined to play no farther than this; I am much obliged to you for the favour, and will return it to-morrow morning.

Sir Charles. There is no occasion, madam; I have business your way to-morrow morning, and if you permit me that honour, will wait on you about twelve.

Ismena. You may depend, sir, on my being at home.

Clarinda, who had not opened her mouth all this time, no sooner saw her fair friend receive the money, than she laid her hand on hers, and with a
gay

gay air, said to her : ‘ Now, my dear, I am ready
 ‘ for you, if you please, and willing to venture as
 ‘ much with you, as you have borrowed of Sir
 ‘ Charles.’ To this Ismena replied, with more
 seriousness than she was wont to put on : ‘ No,
 ‘ madam, I have been very unlucky here, and am
 ‘ resolved to change hands ; I see Lady Longmore
 ‘ has given out at the whist table yonder, I’ll go
 ‘ and take her place.’

With these words she rose hastily from her seat, and did as she had said : Sir Charles followed her to the other table, and stood behind her chair till he saw her win more than the sum he had lent her. On the company’s breaking up, she looked round the room for Sir Charles, in order, as I suppose, to return the money to him ; but if she had any such design, he had taken care to prevent it, by leaving the place before she had done playing. This action of Sir Charles, joined to some amorous glances I had perceived him to regard her with, made me suspect he had some farther view than mere complaisance in what he had done ; but as he was generally accounted a man of honour, and she had an unblemished character, I suspended my judgment till I should see the event of the visit she promised to receive from him the next morning.

After I had quitted this scene of gay confusion, as Mr Addison elegantly expresses it, and had time to ruminate on the transactions that evening had presented me with, Sir Charles and Ismena ran very much in my head, but did not so totally engross my attention, as to make me negligent to all others :— I had heard several of the assembly say to each other, that Miss Allmode was a most beautiful young creature, and would certainly be the reigning toast of the town, if not spoiled by the affection of her mother ; and this distinct description gave me a curiosity

riosity to see the girl, and in what manner her self-sufficient ladyship behaved towards her. Accordingly I laid down a plan for my progression the next morning, which was this: — to go to Lady Allmode's early, and from thence to Ismena at the time Sir Charles had appointed. — I then began to remember that the night was far advanced, so went to bed, as it is probable some of my readers may find it necessary to do at that time.



CHAP. VI.

Contains such Things as are not often to be met with, neither in the one nor the other Sex; yet are, or at least ought to be, equally interesting to both.

IR O S E next morning more early than I had been accustomed to do, in order to prepare for my two visits; but in spite of all the expedition I could practise, I found myself obliged to postpone either the one or the other till another day. So much time was elapsed, first in transcribing what I had seen at Lady Playfield's, and then in getting the dialogues engraved on my Tablets expunged by the pure fingers of my yet unpolluted virgin, that, when all was ready, the clock wanted but few minutes of twelve. I hesitated not whether I should go to Lady Allmode's or to Ismena; for, being prepossessed in favour of the latter, I went thither in a lucky time. — Sir Charles Fairlove was just stepping out of his chair; — I followed him up stairs, and Ismena received him with great gaiety, accompanied with an equal air of modesty: — as soon as they were seated, she said to him:

Ismena. Your money was very fortunate, Sir Charles; I did not lose one guinea after I became your borrower,

Sir

Sir Charles. Madam, I congratulate myself for being so happy to serve you, tho' on so insignificant an occasion;— but should be better pleased to have it in my power to do so in much greater things.

Ismena. I doubt not of your generosity, and if ever I am reduced to the same exigence again, it is likely, may have recourse to the same hand; in the mean time, Sir Charles, let me return the favour you have already conferred upon me.

Sir Charles. This trifle, madam, is neither worth your returning nor my receiving, nor should I have ever thought on it, if I had not given you credit on an infinitely more valuable account.

Ismena. Credit! as how, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. Yes, madam, a debt I am too impatient to wait long for the payment of, and am come to claim.

Ismena. You rally well, Sir Charles; but as I cannot comprehend the purport, am not prepared to give an answer.

Sir Charles. No, i'faith, madam, you will find me extremely serious; sure, you cannot be so strangely forgetful as not to recollect what you lost to me last night at play?

Ismena. I lost nothing but what I paid, Sir Charles.

Sir Charles. Nothing, madam?

Ismena. No, upon my honour.

Sir Charles. You have named the very thing,— your honour, madam;— when a lady ventures her honour at a gaming-table, and is so unlucky to lose, she must expect to pay the forfeit.

Ismena. What do you mean, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. My meaning needs no explanation, madam;— you lost your honour to me, and I now demand the immediate possession of what I fairly won.

Ismena. Ridiculous!

Sir

Sir Charles. Madam, the contempt you treat my pretensions with will not take away the validity of them; what was once your honour is now no longer so, but mine, and at my disposal; and you would not, sure, go about to defraud me of the goods that fortune has bestowed upon me?

With these words he threw his arms about her waist, with a freedom which shewed he indeed looked upon her as his own: she seemed a little alarmed at this action, and starting from him, endeavoured to repulse the temerity he was guilty of, by saying to him:

Ismena. Forbear; this fooling is offensive.

Sir Charles. Madam, this coyness is trifling; I am surpris'd you will oblige me to have recourse to force for what is so much my due, and I should set a higher value upon, if chearfully resigned.

He then catch'd hold of her a second time, and made an offer to bear her into another room; — the grasp he had taken of her was not so strenuous, however, but that she easily disengag'd herself; and, having done so, cried out, with a voice and air full of the extremest disdain,

Ismena. 'Till this action, I scarce could think you were in earnest: — Base, presuming man, how dare you entertain thoughts so unworthy of me?

Sir Charles. How dare you, madam, hazard on the chance of a game at cards what seems so precious to you?

Ismena. Oh, despicable! — to turn that into a matter of seriousness which was only meant in jest!

Sir Charles. We men, madam, take all the advantages we can when we play with a fine woman; and you may be assur'd, I shall not easily be prevailed upon to relinquish those I have gain'd over you.

Ismena. The vain idea will little avail your vile purpose.

Sir

Sir Charles. You may be mistaken, madam; the laws of Westminster-Hall, indeed, will scarcely take any cognizance of an affair of this nature; but those laws by which the polite world are govern'd, I mean the laws of gaming, will infallibly give it on my side:—that pride of your's will be humbled, when you see your stake of honour become the public jest, and all that passed between us the subject of a news-paper.

Ismena. I am confounded! — you cannot certainly be the monster you appear!

Sir Charles. I would not wish you, madam, to put me to the proof.

Ismena. Oh, Heavens! — to what has one unguarded word exposed me!

She could not utter this exclamation without letting fall some tears, which I perceived had a great effect on Sir Charles, by the change it occasioned in his countenance; he affected, however, to take no notice of it, and, resuming his former boldness, went on:

Sir Charles. You see, madam, how it is; you are entirely in my power; and if I cannot have my agreement, I will have my revenge, or at least an equivalent for both.

Ismena. What equivalent!

Sir Charles. You must redeem your forfeited honour by a sum of money.

Ismena. Name it then.

Sir Charles. Let me consider, madam:—a woman's honour, as times now are, and beauty renders itself so cheap, will bear but a low price at the market; but as you are well-born, well accomplished, are extremely handsome, and have more perfections than most of your sex can boast of, I think five hundred pounds is the least I can demand.

Ismena. You shall have it, sir.

With

With this she ran hastily to a little cabinet that stood in the room, and having taken from thence what she wanted, turn'd again to the table, saying,

Ismena. Those two Bank-bills, sir, contain the sum you mention;—take them, and ease me of your presence.

Sir Charles. I must first examine, madam, if they are genuine: yes, they are right; and now, methinks, 'tis pity to rob you of so much money; five hundred pounds will purchase five hundred pretty trinkets, and I cannot receive it without feeling some concern.

Ismena. Oh, you need be under no concern on that score;—were it five times the sum, I would gladly give it to be rid for ever both of you and your impudent demand.

Sir Charles. Yet, in spite of all this severity, I shall willingly restore these bills on one condition.

Ismena. Sir, I shall make no conditions with you; therefore be gone and leave me.

Sir Charles. Not, 'till you have heard me, madam:—the condition I would stipulate is only this, that you will make a solemn promise never to play again, except for mere diversion, with some select friends who you are certain will take no ungenerous advantage of you.

Ismena. There is little occasion for me to bind myself by a promise to avoid a thing which has already proved so mischievous; the insults I have received from you will make me detest the sight of cards, and fly the society of all who pursue that dangerous amusement.

Sir Charles. It is enough; my ends are answered; and thus, on my knees, let me restore your bills, and with them a heart which has long been devoted to you, and never harbour'd a wish to your dishonour.

Never

Never had I known greater anxiety for any thing not relating to myself, or my particular friends, than I did for the issue of this conversation ; — I had been extremely scandalized at some part of Sir Charles's behaviour ; yet, by many indications could not set him down in my mind for the mercenary villain he affected to be ; and was now as much rejoiced to see a likelihood of not having been deceived in my conjectures in his favour, as the reader will presently be convinced. Ismena, being too much amazed at this sudden turn to make an immediate reply, he went on thus, — still kneeling :

Sir Charles. Oh, Ismena ! forgive the seeming brutality I have been guilty of ; I counterfeited the libertine, the villain, only to shew you there was a possibility for you to have met with such a one in reality ; and assumed the most odious character, in order to render your's more truly amiable : the tender passion you inspired me with has made me keep a watchful eye over all your actions ; — I found you perfect in every thing except a too great readiness to follow the example of others in the destructive love of play ; — I know the dangers to which your sex are exposed by it, and that there were many snares spread for your innocence in particular ; by this means even last night there were some in company who wanted but the same opportunity I had to behave as I have done, though with far different views. Oh ! pardon, therefore, the only stratagem I could think of to clear your mind of a propensity which might in time have sullied all its brightness.

Ismena. Rise, Sir Charles ; the diversity, I might say, indeed, the perplexity of my thoughts hindered me, 'till now ; from observing the posture you were in ; pray be seated, sir. — If I may give credit to your words, I am infinitely obliged to you
for

for the care you took of my reputation, when you saw it totally neglected by myself.

Sir Charles. No, madam, say not so;—I dare believe you have never failed in a due regard for reputation, and am certain that the breath of slander has never presumed to blast it; and I could not mean to reproach you for any thing that has been, but to warn you against what might be:—an immoderate inclination for gaming, in your sex, I take to be the same as an immoderate inclination to drinking is in ours; both are equally intoxicating and destructive to right reason; they make the brain grow giddy, incapable of reflection, or any other pursuit than the darling folly, and they run headlong on, envelop'd in a mist of errors, where fortune, fame, and peace of mind are sometimes irrecoverably lost.

Ismena. Oh, Sir Charles, you have opened my eyes to see what my inadvertency might one day have plunged me in.

Sir Charles. I know very well, madam, you wanted only to be reminded of the danger to enable you to avoid it;—the manner in which I have done so may have, perhaps, appear'd too presuming; but I fear'd more gentle methods might not have had the effect.

Ismena. Make no apologies, Sir Charles;—I am now convinced you meant me well, and I thank you for it.

Sir Charles. If you accept it as a proof of friendship, it may in time engage you to believe that a sincere and tender friendship in a person of my sex to one of yours deserves a softer name, and call it love.

Ismena. We will not cavil about names, but I must acknowledge, Sir Charles, by what motive soever you have been actuated, the benefit is mine.

Sir

Sir Charles. How blest'd am I in this confession ! But, charming Ismena, may I not be permitted to wait on you sometimes, and have leave to hope the services I shall hereafter pay will not be rejected.

Ismena. I flatter myself with being able to regulate my future conduct so as not to give you occasion to offer any of that frightful sort you have done this morning ; and if I should relapse into my former errors, could neither expect nor deserve you should take the same trouble for my reformation.

She spoke these words with so obliging a smile, that Sir Charles could not forbear testifying the transport he was in by imprinting several passionate kisses on one of her hands ; after which, looking on her with an equal mixture of tenderness and respect, he said,

Sir Charles. Incomparable Ismena ! how impossible is it for me to express either what you deserve, or what I feel in a full sensibility of your perfections !

Ismena. I desire you will not go about to express either the one or the other ;—the only merit I can boast of is in being so early convinced of my fault, and that I am so is wholly owing to yourself ;—for I confess to you, Sir Charles, that though it is but lately I have begun to like play at all, yet by conversing with those who seem to have no other way of passing their time, it grew by very swift degrees more pleasing to me ; and I believe that it would, in time, have become so habitual to me, that I should have expected the hour of sitting down to cards as naturally as that of sitting down to dinner ;—but in the mirror you have presented to me, I now see, that to indulge this amusement to an excess, is not only a folly below the dignity of a thinking mind, but also a kind of Scylla or Carybdis, formed by ourselves in the ocean of life, as if on purpose to wreck our fortunes, honour, reputation, and every thing that is dear.

Sir

Sir Charles. Oh, madam! every word you speak on this occasion thrills me to the very soul; I am charm'd, I am ravish'd to find in you such solid reason, such an amazing quickness of apprehension.

Ismena. You are relapsing into the panegyric strain; but I will hear no more of it:—you must give me leave to play the monitor in my turn, — I have been your convert, and you must now be mine;—remember, Sir Charles, that to listen to the tongue of flattery is no less pernicious than the folly you have taught me to be ashamed of.

Sir Charles. I grant it, madam; but the just praises of real virtue cannot cause a blush either in the face of the giver or the receiver.

Ismena. Well, I find you will have the better of the argument, whether the tenet you take upon you to maintain be right or wrong; therefore, to put an end to it, What think you of a turn or two in the Mall this morning?

Sir Charles. Madam, I shall be happy to attend you any where.

She then called for her capuchin and little muff, which being immediately brought, Sir Charles gave her his hand to lead her down stairs, and I retired to my apartment.

I had met with nothing a great while that gave me a more sensible satisfaction than to find a lady, in all the pride of blooming youth, beautiful, gay, and surrounded with a crowd of flatterers, bear with so much cheerfulness the conviction of her error, and testify so much gratitude to the person to whom she was indebted for her reformation. The rough method he had taken for this purpose, was so far from raising any resentment in her, after once knowing the motive, that she look'd upon him as her best friend, esteemed, and loved him for it;

it;—conscious that it required no less than such a proceeding to rouse her from that thoughtlessness which alone could have made her fall into an error, the danger of which she might otherwise have too late perceived.

I thought I had discovered something in these two accomplished persons, that seemed to me as if Heaven had ordained them for each other, and I soon found I had not been mistaken;—they are now married with the highest approbation of all friends on both sides; and, in the opinion of as many as have the pleasure of their acquaintance, bid fair to be one of the happiest pairs that ever entered into Hymen's bands.



CHAP. VII.

The Author has been in some Debate within himself, whether he should insert or not, as he is conscious it will be little relished by the fashionable genteel Part of his Readers.

THERE is something very unaccountable in an over-curious disposition;—it makes us eager, impatient, anxious, indefatigable in prying into things which promise us not the least pleasure in the discovery of when known:—a reader who has not this propensity in his nature will doubtless think, by what I said of Lady Allmode in the fifth Chapter, that I had already seen enough of her behaviour to keep me from being desirous of seeing more. But as every one is willing to find some excuse or other, even for the silliest things he can be guilty of, so I thought, that in being a spectator of Lady Allmode's conduct in her own family, and the manner in which she trained up her daughter, something might present itself

itself to me that would more than compensate for the time I should expend in going to her house.

Accordingly I went, and gain'd an easy access, the door happening to be open just as I reach'd it, to let out a footman in a grey livery, who had come to deliver some message; but was a good deal bewildered on my entrance, as I had never been in the house before, and was entirely unacquainted with the situation of any of the rooms: the measure of time is always doubled when we wait for an event with impatience;—I remain'd not long, however, in this dilemma; a servant running hastily up the back stairs, with some drinking glasses on a silver waiter in his hand; I followed him into a room where a woman, who by her appearance I guess'd was her ladyship's Abigail, received from him what he had brought, and carried it into an inner chamber; the door of which she shut after her, but not so suddenly as to prevent my entering with her.

Here I found lady Allmode; but had she appear'd to me in any other place, should never have known her for the same I had seen at lady Playfield's route;—so vast a difference is it in the power of art sometimes to make. At the time of my coming in she was under the operation of having her eyebrows shaped with a small pair of pincers, by one of those persons who go by the name of Tyre-women; but, in my opinion, ought rather to be call'd face-menders, since their business is not so much to ornament the head as to rectify the defects of the features. The important work being over, lady Allmode turn'd to a magnifier that stood upon her toilet, to see if all was right; and having looked into it, cried out hastily,

Lady. Oh, Mrs. Prim, sure your eyes are in eclipse to-day! you have left no less than three exuberant hairs on my right brow, and I think arch'd it somewhat higher than the other.

30 THE INVISIBLE SPY.

Mrs. Prim. I beg pardon of your ladyship, but I will presently remedy that error. — On this the artist employ'd her little instrument for a second essay ; after which lady Allmode lock'd in the glass again, and said,

Lady. It is very well now ; but I look wretchedly to-day, and it is no wonder : What do you think, Mrs. Prim ? that careless oaf there put me to-bed last night without my Sperma-Ceti mask.

Mrs. Prim. That was a great omission, indeed, madam ; but your lady must forgive it, Mrs. Pinup does not use to neglect these things.

Pinup. I am very sorry for it, Mrs. Prim ; but it was so late when her ladyship went to-bed ; and her ladyship was so sleepy—

Lady. And your foolship so sleepy too, I suppose. But that is not all, Mrs. Prim ; the creature threw it into some corner or other where Veni got at it, and this morning it was found half devour'd.

Pinup. Your ladyship knows I have almost cried my eyes out about it, and that I offer'd to bespeak another, and pay for it out of my own pocket.

Lady. Pay for it ! idiot.—But tell me, creature, what atonement can'st thou ever make for these depredations on my countenance ? Here I shall lose a whole day ; for 'tis impossible I can think of appearing in public.

Mrs. Prim. I dare answer for Mrs. Pinup, that she will never be guilty of the like fault again ; therefore I beg your ladyship will forgive her.

Lady. Yes, yes—I have forgiven her, and I do forgive her ; but she must expect to be told of it sometimes : if she had lived with some ladies, they would have turn'd her out of doors that instant ;—*mais toujours les douceurs du cœur* lay an embargo on my indignation.

Pinup. Your ladyship is all goodness

Lady.

Lady. Well, well, say no more about it:—I am sorry I struck you; but take the Dresden suit I had on yesterday, and let me see you in it.

Pinup. I humbly thank your ladyship.

Lady. Say no more of it. Oh, *mon Dieu!* I begin to feel the effects of my disconcertion;—every membrane through my whole frame has a pulsation in it;—give me something to take this instant, or I shall faint. But as to the Sperma-Ceti mask, is it not possible for you to get one ready for me before I sleep, else my face will be a perfect nutmeg-grater by to-morrow morning?

Mrs. Prim. Oh, your ladyship need be under no apprehensions on that score; I always keep several; they want only sprinkling with a little orange-flower water, to take off the scent:—I will send your ladyship one this afternoon. Has your ladyship any farther commands?

Lady. Yes, you may send me a box of red for my cheeks; but do not let it be quite so high-colour'd as the last.

Mrs. Prim. I shall take care to mix it so as to please your ladyship. In speaking this, she made her exit with abundance of low curtsies.

Pinup was returning to her lady's chamber, but met her just coming out, in order to pass into another room: on seeing her she said to her,

Lady. I think this girl takes a long time in dressing; go and see if she is ready, and bid her come to me.

Finding now that there was some probability of my seeing the young lady, which had been, indeed, the chief motive of my going thither, I attended lady Allmode where she went, and placed myself in one corner of the room; where I did not wait above three or four minutes before Pinup, who had gone immediately on her errand, return'd, leading Miss Allmode. She seem'd to be about fourteen years of age; her face was extremely pretty, and I

believe nature had given her a shape no less excellent, if it had not been deform'd by her stay-maker. On her approach, lady Allmode took her by the arm, turn'd her round several times, and examin'd her whole dress from head to foot; after which, looking very well pleas'd, she said,

Lady. Ay, miss, now you look like what you are:—I protest, I scarce knew you for my own child in the obsolete condition you came from the country.—Are you not highly delighted with yourself?

Miss. No, indeed, madam; I think since 'tis the fashion to have one's cloaths made in this manner, there ought to be as many chimnies in a room as there are chairs.

Lady. Sure, miss, you are not cold?

Miss. It would be very strange, madam, if I were not, when my stays are so contrived that the air comes down to the very bottom of my back, and below the pit of my stomach; and my petticoats so short that I am every minute fancying I have tuck'd them up in order to have my legs and feet wash'd:—then as to my ears, I do declare I feel the wind blow from the one to the other, and pierce into my very brain.

Lady. Oh, fye, miss; this being in the country has spoiled you:—whatever is the fashion is never either too cold or too hot.

Miss. I must beg your ladyship's pardon; for I am certain this fashion is a great deal too much of both;—the tightness of my sleeves, the load of flounces at my elbow, and the huge semi-circles, as heavy as panniers, hanging on each hip, make some part of me sweat while all the rest are freezing.

Lady. Oh hideous!—frightful!—Sweat!—what a word is there from the mouth of a fine young lady! Whenever you have occasion to complain of too much warmth, you should always say,
I per-

I perspire :—but I am surpris'd you should not be charmed with so becoming a dress.

Miss. I feel uneasy, and quite uncomfortable, madam.

Lady. A little use will reconcile you to it. — Without vanity, miss, you are exceeding handsome ; and now I have made you fit to appear in public, the praises that will be given you, and the fine things said to you, will raise such a *gaieté du cœur*, as will make you forget all that you call uncomfortable.

Miss. I should be glad, madam, if any thing would do that.

Lady. You must learn to know yourself, miss ; look in the glass ; you have fine eyes, a very lovely mouth, a well-turn'd face, a delicate complexion, good hair ; in fine, you are a complete beauty :—but what is beauty without the possessor understands how to manage it to advantage ? a milk-maid may be a beauty, and no one take any notice of her ;—you must practice the art of displaying every charm, and rendering yourself conspicuous.

Miss. Indeed, madam, I am quite ignorant of these things.

Lady. I perceive you are, miss ; but that is not your fault : my formal aunt has never given you any instructions in this point, I suppose ; — a few lessons, however, will soon put you in the way to make the most of what nature has bestow'd upon you.—In the first place, miss, you must be sure to thrust out your chin as far as you are able :—when you come into a room, always let your chin be the first thing seen of you, as if it were the harbinger of the rest of your person.—Secondly, you must never keep your two hands together, in that stiff country manner you now do, for above the space of a moment ; but throw sometimes the one and sometimes the other carelessly back, and lean sit

on your hip ; but when you are speaking, be sure you employ both in gestures that may enforce attention to what you say. Then, as for your eyes, miss, — you must always keep them broad open, and be sure to have the last look of every one that takes notice of you.

Miss. Does your ladyship mean the men as well as the women ?

Lady. Undoubtedly,—the men to chuse ; a polite woman, and who is fashionably genteel, is never ashamed of any thing that she either sees or hears.

Her ladyship was going on with some farther directions concerning the management of the eyes, when she was interrupted by a footman, who came to acquaint her, that a person, who called himself Monsieur Le Petit Solee had brought her ladyship a dozen pair of French shoes ;—on which she cried out in a kind of transport, ‘ Oh, bring him up ! bring him up this minute !—I have been involved in the utmost distress : — I have had nothing but odious English shoes upon my feet for a whole week past.’

As I was now heartily weary of my situation, and had no curiosity to see either Monsieur Le Petit Solee or his French shoes, I took the opportunity of the door being open, and left this scene of folly and affectation, regretting the time I had thrown away in being there.



C H A P. VIII.

Wherein the Power of Beauty, when accompanied with Virtue, is displayed, in a very remarkable as well as affecting Occurrence.

VANITY, though placed rather among the follies than the vices of human nature, is yet.

per sometimes productive of the very worst we can be guilty of; and the least mischief it does when indulged to an excess, is to render the person possessed of it obstinate, proud, impatient of contradiction, deaf to reproof, full of imaginary merit, and apt to despise what is truly so in another. This weakness, to give it no worse a name, is generally ascribed to the softer sex, who being from their very childhood accustomed to flattery and praise, are too ready to believe they are in reality the angels and goddesses they are told they are; but in my opinion, it is doing great injustice to the ladies, to say they are the only culpable, since we often find men, who, without having the same excuse, are no less liable to fall into the same error.

Mutantius is one of the most graceful and most accomplished gentlemen of the present age: he has learning, wit, honour, generosity, and good-nature: in a word, he is such as might give him a just title to universal admiration, were he but a little less conscious of deserving it. To render his fine qualities yet more conspicuous, he had the advantages of being descended from a very ancient family, and in possession of an ample fortune. He had not long been of age, before several considerable matches were proposed to him; all the men of his acquaintance, who had sisters or daughters, courted his alliance: wherever he appeared, the ladies put on their best looks; and not a few there were who could help betraying by their eyes the secret languishment of their hearts.

Having his choice of so many, was probably the cause that for a long time hindered him from attaching himself to any particular object; — he was polite and gallant to all, — but made a serious address to none: — he would pay his morning devoirs to one, — walk in the Mall with another,

dine with a third, drink tea with a fourth, attend a fifth to the play, or some other public entertainment : in short, he divided his respects so equally to each, that no one had reason either to exult on the power of her own charms, or dread those of her competitors. The little deity of soft desires would not, however, suffer a man so formed for love to remain always among the number of insensibles : — at length a glance shot from Aristella's eyes was a dart that reached his very soul : all the different graces he had seen in other beauties seemed now to him to be summed up in her.

Aristella was, indeed, very lovely, and had been well educated : but her father, by gaming, and other extravagancies, had reduced his estate so low, that when divided between four daughters, which he left at his decease, the income was scarce sufficient to buy them cloaths according to their birth ; two of them, however, were married to tradesmen of good repute in the city, and a third to a gentleman of a small estate in the country. Aristella, who was the youngest, and the only one unprovided for, lived sometimes with one, and sometimes with another of the sisters, and, by this means, having few expences besides her dress, was enabled to appear in as genteel a manner as any woman of a moderate fortune could do.

It was at the house of one of her brothers-in-law, who was a linen-draper, and served Mutantius with hollands and cambricks, that he first beheld her : — happening to call there when the master was abroad, he was desired to walk into the parlour till his return : — Aristella was at work with her sister when he came in ; but the latter knowing he was a good customer, threw aside what she was about, and received him with a great deal of politeness : — her husband not coming
home

home so soon as he was expected, she made tea. Mutantius readily accepted the little regale she presented to him, as it gave him the opportunity of feasting his eyes on her fair sister:—on their entering into conversation, the tongue of Arifstella lost her nothing of what her eyes had gained; and as her beauty had in an instant captivated his heart, so her wit riveted the chain, and made the conquest sure.

The tradesman at last returning, Mutantius, after having agreed for some things he wanted in the shop, and ordered them to be sent home, took an unwilling leave; but carried with him an idea which had afterwards more influence than he at first imagined. Love in its beginning plays wantonly about the heart, tickling it with flattering images; but having once got full possession there, rules with tyrannic sway, and bears down all before it. Mutantius indulged the pleasing contemplation of Arifstella's beauty 'till he was no longer able to live without seeing her, and, for this purpose, went again to the linen-draper's, pretending there were some things he had forgot to bespeak when he was there before. After having bought those things which the seeming want of had given him an excuse for going thither so soon again, and some previous discourse on ordinary matters, he told the draper that he should be glad to have his wife's advice concerning the trimming of some shirts which were then making for him:—to this the other replied, that his wife would think herself honoured in doing him any service, but that she was at that time unfortunately abroad.

Mutantius was not sorry to hear she was out of the way, and resumed briskly,—‘Why then, I think it will be equal to me if the young lady who was with her when I had the pleasure of

‘drinking tea here, will do me that favour: she seemed, I thought, to have good nature enough to grant such a request.’ ‘You mean my sister,’ ‘sir,’ cried the draper. — ‘I think your wife call’d her so,’ answered Mutantius. ‘Yes, sir,’ rejoined the former; ‘but she is gone down to Kent this morning.’ — ‘I thought she had lived with you,’ said Mutantius. — ‘Not constantly, sir,’ replied he; ‘but she has left us now sooner than she would have done, on account of her sister’s lying-in.’

It was easy for a man of so much wit, and of so much design as Mutantius now had in his head, to get from the honest unsuspecting draper all he wanted to be informed of in relation to the circumstances of Aristella. As the inclinations of this gentleman, vehemently amorous as they were, had not at present the least tendency to marriage with the young beauty concerning whose affairs he had been so inquisitive, he was far from being mortified on hearing she had no fortune, and was in a manner dependant upon her kindred; nor thought it less conducive to the interest of his passion, that she was removed into the country, where he imagined he might find a more easy method of winning her to his desires, than he could have done in town, under the eye of a sister, whom, by the little he had seen of her, he perceived to be a woman of great discretion. He lost no time; but the very next day, attended by one servant, posted down to Canterbury, within a quarter of a mile of which city Aristella at present resided.

Having no acquaintance in that part of the country, he took up his lodgings in one of the best inns, where, pretending it was mere curiosity to see that ancient city which had brought him thither, several offered to accompany him to those places which most deserved the attention of a traveller.

veller. Among the number of these hospitable persons, was the brother-in-law of Aristella: — it is easy to suppose, that Mutantius made use of all the arts he was master of, to insinuate himself into the good graces of a person whose acquaintance was so necessary to his design; and indeed, had not this accident happened, there seemed little probability of his accomplishing them; for Aristella kept so close in the house, that though he had been four days at Canterbury, and taken all imaginable pains to get a glimpse of her, he never yet had been so happy.

Mutantius had something in him no less engaging to the men than enchanting to the women: he knows how to suit himself to the humour of every one he converses with; it was therefore not difficult for him to cultivate a friendship with a plain country gentleman, who, free from all guile, was equally free from all distrust. — Beechly, for so he was called, had no other fault than loving his bottle a little too well, which Mutantius perceiving, fell in with his foible, and thereby gained his whole heart.

These two gentlemen drinking together very late, Mutantius had plied the other so fast with glasses, that he became more than ordinarily intoxicated; our lover obliged him to suffer himself to be attended home by his footman, and the next morning sent a polite message to enquire after his health. Beechly took this so kindly, that he came immediately after to the lodgings of Mutantius, to shew that he was well, and to desire he would do him the honour of dining with him that day. ‘My wife,’ says he, ‘is in the straw; but she has a sister who is at present with us, a good smart well behaved girl, and will receive you in the best manner she is able.’

It is not to be doubted, but that the heart of Mutantius fluttered with the most rapturous sensation on hearing himself invited to a place where he was sure of enjoying the company of her he so much languished for, and had taken such pains to pursue. It is needless to say that he readily accepted so obliging a summons, nor that he prolonged the hour of complying with it: he was met by Beechly at the gate with all imaginable demonstrations of a sincere welcome, and conducted into the parlour, where Aristella, who soon after entered, was presented to him.

Whatever emotions Mutantius might feel in approaching to salute her, they were yet inferior to hers in the first surprize of seeing him there: — she had heard her brother Beechly talk of a fine gentleman lately come to Canterbury, and had that morning received orders from him to prepare a handsome dinner for his entertainment; but as she had not heard him mention the name of his new friend, and had no curiosity to ask any thing concerning him, could little expect he was the same she had seen at her other sister's in London. She had, it seems, from the first interview with him, been possessed of sentiments in his favour, which if not altogether so passionate as those she inspired him with, were yet no less soft and tender; but conscious of the vast disparity between their fortunes, she had endeavoured to check the growth of an inclination, which she thought could only be destructive of her peace. But on this second and unexpected meeting him again, the stifled wishes of her soul burst out afresh; a sudden flow of joy rushed over her heart, which, joined to the surprize she was in, spread a kind of wild though agreeable confusion in her eyes and voice, while she made those compliments which civility exacted from her to a stranger.

Mutantius,

Mutantius, to whose penetrating eyes the change in her countenance was very visible, looked on it as a happy presage of the success of his design; and the secret pleasure this imagination gave him, brightened all his air, and added new graces to every thing he said or did; so that Aristella became now quite lost in love and admiration. This day proved, indeed, extremely fortunate to Mutantius: dinner was no sooner over, than Beechly was called out to a person who waited to speak with him on some business in another room; the lover took this opportunity of declaring his passion to his mistress, and relating to her the pains he had taken to get a sight of her; and the answers she made, tho' very modest and discreet, were such as gave him no reason to despair. — Beechly returning, he broke off their conversation; he took Mutantius to shew him his garden, which, tho' not ornamented with statues, or any exotic curiosities, was very pretty. Mutantius was lavish in his praises on every thing he saw; but above all, his fancy seemed taken with a long grass walk, and a close arbour at the end of it. — ‘If I had such a walk as this in town, said he, I should never trouble the Mall, Vauxhall, nor Ranelagh.’ — ‘Since you cannot carry this with you, replied Beechly, you shall be extremely welcome to make as much use of it as you think fit while you stay in this part of the world.’

Mutantius thanked him; but said he was an early riser, and should chuse such a walk chiefly for the sake of meditation in a morning, and that to come at such hours might give too much trouble to the servants. — ‘I can easily remedy that difficulty, since you make it one, answered the other; there is a door that opens behind the arbour into a little field where I keep a cow; — I seldom have occasion to make use of the key, and it is at your service; — so you may come in as early or as late

“late as you please, without disturbing any of my family, or being disturbed by them.”

The lover made a thousand acknowledgments to him for this favour, and received the key, which, in his mind, he looked upon as a sure passport to all the happiness he wished at present to enjoy.

He went the next morning, taking a book in his hand to prevent suspicion, in case he should be seen, though there was no great danger of that, as Beechly kept but two maids and one man servant, who, it might be supposed, had too much business in a morning to ramble in the garden; but he might reasonably hope to meet with Aristella, who having nothing to employ her time, might probably amuse some part of it in that agreeable place. It is likely, however, he might have been disappointed for many days together, if fortune had not now attended him, as she had hitherto done during the course of this adventure.

Aristella was there indeed before him, in the same walk, and very near the arbour thro’ which he entered; — she had come thither to gather cinquefoil for her sister, the nurse who attended her being apprehensive of her falling into a feverish disorder. ’Tis likely she was little less surprised on seeing him in that place, than she had been when introduced to her by her brother; but as I was not present, and have this part of the story from the report of others, can relate nothing of the particulars of their discourse, and only say in general, that he spared no vows nor protestations to convince her of his passion, and that he prevailed on her to return to him again, after having carried in the herbs. His entreaties, joined to her own secret inclinations, engaged her to see him the next day; this meeting was succeeded by another, that by a third, and so on for several mornings together, — every one of them still more endearing him to her affections;

affections; but in spite of the pleasure she took in his addresses, she could not keep herself from some doubt of the sincerity of his passion, whenever she reflected on the inequality of their fortunes. One day, expressing herself very emphatically on this occasion, he cried out, ‘Talk not of fortune; — by Heaven, your heart is all I wish!’ — This he repeated so often, and so tenderly, that she at last confessed it was already his.

Having brought her to this point, he now thought it proper to let her know the real aim of all his courtship: he began with telling her, that beauty, such as hers, merited to be set off with all the advantages of dress and grandeur; that she had wasted too much of her youth on a mean dependance on her kindred; and concluded with the offer of a large settlement, protesting to her at the same time that he would never marry any other woman, and that she should live in every thing like his wife, except the name.

If a dagger had pierced the gentle breast of Ariella, it could not have given her more pain than did this cruel declaration: for some moments she was unable to make any reply, but burst into a flood of tears, and discovered all the symptoms of the most violent grief: he endeavoured to calm this tempest in her mind, by all the arts that love and wit could inspire; but all was now in vain: a virtuous pride by degrees got the better of her sorrows, and starting from him, she cried out, — ‘Deceitful and ungenerous man! think not that your base desires shall triumph over the weakness. I have confessed for you; no, I will never see you more, nor henceforth think of you but with horror and detestation.’

In speaking these words, she flew out of the arbour; rage gave wings to her feet; yet Mutantius would certainly have overtaken her, if the
fight.

sight of a man, whom Beechly had employed to do some work in the garden, had not made him turn back. He went to his lodgings much disconcerted at this accident; but the knowledge he had of Aristella's affection for him kept him from totally despairing:—he repaired to the arbour next morning, but no Aristilla appeared; he went again, but had no better success; resolved to see her if possible, he made a visit at the house, and told Beechly in a free manner, that he was come to take a second dinner with him; to which he replied with a compliment suitable to the occasion.

Mutantius was again disappointed: Aristella hearing he was there, sent word to her brother, that she had a violent tooth-ach, and desired he would excuse her from coming down:—this drove the lover almost to distraction; he went home, wrote to her, and made his footman go, as of his own accord, to chat with the servants, and loiter about the house till he should see Aristella, and deliver the letter to her. The fellow found means to execute his commission; Aristella took the letter on his presenting it to her, and went up into her chamber; but after reflecting a little, would not trust her own heart so far as to read this dangerous epistle: she therefore put it under a cover, and having sealed and directed it, came down, and gave it the man, saying, 'There's my answer to your master's letter.'

Never had the vanity of Mutantius met with so severe a shock, yet could he not forbear revering the virtue he attempted to destroy:—if before he loved, he now adored her; and the more he considered her perfections, the more he found her worthy to be his wife;—yet when he thought of marriage, the idea of that state was irksome to him: he knew that at present he was the idol of the fair, but should cease to be so, if once he became a husband:

band: — he could not bear to lose his darling admiration, yet was equally unable to bear life without the enjoyment of Aristella. After some debate within himself, his passion, however, got the better of his vanity, and he resolved to marry Aristella; but which way to let her know he meant to do so, seemed as great a difficulty as any he had passed thro' in attempting to seduce her: — he was convinced she would neither see him nor receive a letter from him; yet, in spite of all this, love, fertile in contrivances, put a stratagem into his head, which had the desired effect: — it was this:

Beechly's new-born son had not been yet baptised, on account of the mother's having been more than ordinarily indisposed during her lying-in; — he offered to be one of the sponsors, which the other gladly accepted. Aristella could not now avoid his presence, but behaved with so much reserve, scarce ever looking towards him, that a man less conscious of his own merit might have been abash'd. After some time, when most of the company were engaged in conversation, he found an opportunity to say to her, 'Madam, I beseech you will forgive the rash proposal I presumed to make you — be assured I have heartily repented of it, and have now no designs upon you but what are truly honourable:' — to which she replied, 'Sir, I shall never believe a man means me well who has once thought so poorly of me.' 'I only beg,' resumed he, 'the liberty of entertaining you once more in private, and if what I have then to say, does not merit your pardon and favour, I shall leave Canterbury, and perhaps the world, for ever.' — He could add no more at that time, Beechly calling him to pledge him in a bumper to the young Christian; but before they parted, he found means to enforce what he had last said, with
so

so moving an air, that she consented to see him the next morning.

The consequence of this interview was a full forgiveness for what was past on the side of Aristella, and on that of Mutantius a solemn vow of making her his wife the moment she consented to be so; but added, that there were some circumstances in his affairs which required their marriage should be kept a secret for a time: to this last article she made no direct answer at present; but the next day, when they met again by appointment, suffered herself to be overcome by his persuasions, and promised that every thing should be as he would have it. It was at last agreed between them, that he should return to London in a few days, and that she should follow as soon as her sister's recovery permitted to take her leave with decency.

Both these lovers were now in a state of perfect contentment, and each of them observed their promise with the utmost punctuality; but what afterwards befel them must be the subject of another chapter.

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CHAPTER IX.

Contains only a Continuation of the same Narrative, begun in the foregoing Chapter, and will not be concluded in this.

MUTANTIUS being apprised by a letter from Aristella, of the day she should come to town, went in his own coach to Greenwich to meet her, and conducted her to a very handsome lodging in one of the best streets near Bloomsbury-Square, where he had also provided servants to attend her. She was at first a little scrupulous of putting herself under his protection, 'till the sacred ceremony had been performed: — he perceived the apprehensions she was under, and immediately re-

Heved them by renewing his protestations, that the next morning should make his person as inviolably hers, as his heart had been from the first moment he beheld her; and at the same time shewed her a ring and licence, which he had already prepared for that purpose. He supped with her that evening; but when it was over, very respectfully retired, to leave her to that repose he judged necessary after the fatigue of the journey.

I come now to that part of the story which I had an opportunity of being both an eye and ear-witness of. I was acquainted with the gentleman of the house where Aristella was placed, and happened to call there on some business the very next morning after that young lady had been brought thither. My friend told me, among other discourse, that she had let her lodgings at a very high rent; but was apprehensive, the person they were for was no better than a kept-woman: on my asking what ground she had for such a suspicion, she replied, that she had let them to a gentleman of fortune, called Mutantius, for the use of a lady whom he brought to take possession of them the night before, and that he had hired servants to wait upon her, who knew as little of the lady as she did. She further added, that the lady was young and pretty, and that she could not help thinking it a little odd, such a one should be under the care of so gay a spark as Mutantius.

As I was perfectly acquainted with the character of Mutantius, I was of opinion she was in the right; and advised her to say nothing till she saw farther into the matter, and not lose so beneficial a lodger on a bare conjecture. She approved of what I said, and I took my leave, but not to go home; what she had told, filled me with a curiosity to discover something more of this affair, so went no farther than the first blind alley I found, where I
put.

put on my Invisible Belt, and returned again just as Mutantius knocked at the door,—I entered with him, and followed him up stairs. — The sight of Aristella convinced me that the good woman had not been mistaken in the description she gave me of her: — the lovers ran into each other's arms; and Mutantius, looking on her with the greatest tenderness, spoke thus:

Mutantius. Now, my dearest Aristella, I am come to put a final end to all your doubts either of my love or honour.

Aristella. I am pleased to think, that the perfect confidence I have shewn in both, gives me some sort of claim to the proof you are now about to give of them, since I must confess myself in every other respect so unworthy of you.

Mutantius. You are worthy of every thing; but, my dear, you forget that there is another testimony that I expect from you of the regard you have for me.

Aristella. Name it, that my ready compliance may convince you how happy I think myself in every opportunity of obliging you.

Mutantius. It is that you will be content that for some time our marriage may be kept a secret.

Aristella. You know I have promised it.

Mutantius. Yes, in general terms; but you have sisters who are very dear to you, and tho' I doubt not of their discretion, I cannot think a secret safe when trusted in so many hands: will then your love for me enable you to endure their reproaches for your supposed dishonour, rather than reveal what is inconvenient for me to be made known?

Aristella. The trial is a little severe, but will not last for ever.

Mutantius. No, my dear; a time will come when your innocence shall be fully cleared, and like the sun, shine brighter after this short eclipse; —
till

till then may I depend, that the name of wife and husband shall be known only between ourselves?

Aristella. You may.

Mutantius. Swear it then.

Aristella. By all that's sacred.

Mutantius. Hold, my dear; I would have you first understand the full extent of the vow you are about to make; — you swear that no imaginary provocation on my side, nor no unjust contempt nor ill treatment you may meet with from the world, shall ever extort from you a confession that you are my wife, till I myself shall publickly acknowledge you to be so.

Aristella. All this I solemnly swear, and invoke Heaven to bless me as I shall religiously observe it.

Mutantius. Charming, generous creature! and in return, to prevent all future apprehensions in prejudice of my faith or constancy from rising in your breast, if it were possible for me to take a base advantage of the obligation I have laid you under, and make my addresses to another woman on the score of marriage, I here release you from your vow, and leave you at liberty to declare yourself my wife, assert your prior right, and proclaim me for a villain.

Aristella. Heaven forbid it should ever come to that!

Mutantius. No, my *Aristella*, there is no danger; I have already rejected greater offers than ever will be made to me again: to deal sincerely with you, there has been always in my nature an extreme repugnancy to the name of marriage; the name of husband was irksome to me; — no woman but yourself had ever charms to reconcile me to it; but your beauty, sweetness, and unaffected modesty, have now reformed my soul, and, by degrees,

grees, will make me as proud of Hymen's fetters as I should once have been ashamed of them.

Aristella. It shall be my whole study to make them easy to you.

Mutantius. I know it will; but come, my love, a coach waits to carry us to church; that solemn scene which fixes the everlasting happiness or misery of all who approach it in the manner we do.

On concluding these words, he took her by the hand, and led her down stairs; I was close behind them when they went into the coach, which was ordered to drive to Clerkenwell. — I presently supposed he made choice of this place, as there was the least danger of his being seen by any one who knew him. I followed on foot, but came time enough to see Mutantius resign that liberty he had once set so high a value on, as to resolve never to part with; the ceremony was performed by the curate of the parish, and the clerk officiated as father to give away the bride: after all was over, Mutantius desired their marriage might be registered, and a certificate of it given to Aristella; both which were accordingly done.

I now left the new wedded pair to dispose of themselves as they thought fit, and returned to my apartment, in order to ruminate at leisure on an adventure which seemed to me to have in it many inconsistencies. But the more I thought on this adventure, the more I was confounded; and the result of my meditations was, that it must be left to time to unravel the mystery; I kept, however, a watchful eye on the behaviour of Mutantius; but was little the wiser for the pains I took, as I found he only lived in the same gay and gallant manner he had always done in respect to the ladies.

But now, methinks, I hear the reader cry out with some impatience, 'How did Aristella behave all this time? How could she, the wife of this
' *inconstant*

“inconstant man, support the share that others had in his affections?” It is, indeed, impossible for me to say in what manner she would have resented so provoking a circumstance, if known to her; but she lived too retired for it to reach her ears; she had, however, other troubles more than sufficient for human fortitude to sustain, but of what nature must be left to the next chapter to explain.



C H A P. X.

The Catastrophe of this Adventure cannot fail of exciting Compassion in the Breasts of my fair Readers, and also afford Matter of Speculation to the other Sex.

THE pursuit of other adventures, which shall be inserted in their proper places before the conclusion of this work, hindered me for a long time from going to see in what manner Aristella was treated by Mutantius; but at length, some uneasy reflections on her account raised an impatience in me to know the certainty of her present state. Accordingly I went one day to the house where she was lodged; but, to my great surprize, found she had made but a short stay there, and had been removed a considerable time before my coming. On my asking some questions of my friend, concerning the reason of it, the good woman answered me in these or the like terms: — “The affair was just as I expected,” said she; “I pity the poor young gentlewoman, indeed; she has not the looks of such a one; but I suppose she has been decoyed by abundance of fair promises; I wonder, however, that Mutantius, knowing the character of my house, and that I always had people of the
‘best

‘ best fashion lodge with me, should offer to bring
 ‘ a kept-mistress under my roof; but I was very
 ‘ free with him, and told him my mind plainly on
 ‘ the occasion.’

‘ And pray, what answer did he make,’ cried I, with some impatience, ‘ when you called her a kept-mistress?’ — Very little to the purpose truly,’ resumed she; ‘ he only said, that she was a gentlewoman, and a friend of his, and, as such, expected I should treat her civilly: I told him, it was not in my nature to treat any body uncivilly, but that I would encourage no such doings; and therefore desired he would provide another lodging for her:’ — on this, he flew into a passion, told me I was an ignorant, foolish woman, and the like; but I did not regard his bouncing; and as he found I was resolute, took his madam away in a few days afterwards.’

The manner in which this woman spoke, made me extremely commiserate the condition of Aristella, who, though a lawful wife, was obliged, through the caprice of Mutantius, and the vow she had taken, to endure all the contumely due to a prostitute. I would have given almost any thing but the secret of my Invisible Belt and Tablets to have cleared Aristella’s innocence in the fullest manner to this gentlewoman; but as there was no doing one without the other, I was compelled to content myself with getting out of her directions to the place where this much-injured lady was removed, resolving to take the first opportunity to see what atonement the behaviour of Mutantius made to her in private, for the injustice he did her reputation in public.

I was so lucky as to find them together the first day I went; but the scene I was witness of, instead of diminishing, very much added to the concern I had carried with me. Aristella was sitting
 very

very melancholy in one corner of the room, Mutantius in another, with all the marks of discontent and ill-humour in his countenance :—by what followed, it appears that she had been speaking somewhat to him in relation to the discovery of their marriage ;—I doubt not, by what I saw of her behaviour both before and afterwards, that she express'd herself in very gentle terms on the occasion ; but the bare mention of such a thing, to a man of his present way of thinking, was of itself a sufficient offence. I have already described the posture I found him in ; but just as I entered the room he replied to what she had said ; and that reply drew on a conversation which let me into the whole of both their sentiments.

Mutantius. I am sorry to find you have so little regard for me, and I indeed so little prudence, as whenever I am with you to fall eternally upon a subject which you know is so disagreeable to me.

Aristella. If you lov'd me half so well as you once pretended, it would not be so disagreeable ; and you would, at least, acquaint me with the reasons which oblige me to live in the manner I do.

Mutantius. Perhaps it is not proper for me to reveal them.

Aristella. Oh, Mutantius ! I know not what to think of my condition.—Why did you marry me ?

Mutantius. Because I then liked you better than any other woman ; and if I do not still continue to do so, it is your own fault ; I hate to be teaz'd ; besides, the conditions of our marriage were, that it should be kept a secret.

Aristella. Yes,—for a time.

Mutantius. That time will not be shortened by your impatience.

Aristella. It may ; for if it lasts much longer my heart must infallibly break.

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Mutantius. Pish! women's hearts are not of such brittle stuff; the head is in more danger, when swelled with pride and vanity.

Aristella. Indeed, sir, I think it would at least become you to be a little more serious on the occasion.

Mutantius. With all my heart, madam, as serious as you please; for 'faith I am not in a humour to be merry. Seriously then, you seem to me to be one of the most ungrateful and most unreasonable women under the sun. Have I not taken you from a dependence on your sisters? Have you not now good lodgings, servants to wait on you, and an allowance sufficient to support you in a fashion beyond what you could ever have expected? Yet all this is nothing in your account.

Aristella. Nothing, when balanced against a life of infamy: the very servants you upbraid me with despise me while they serve me; the people of the house treat me but with an enforced civility; I pass my days as one who was an alien to the world, and had no business in it; never partake the joys of social conversation; never visit, nor am visited; and scarce dare venture to breathe the open air, lest I could be seen by any who have known me, especially by my sisters, who, mean as you think of them, know how to set a just value upon reputation, and to scorn all riches without it.

Mutantius. A very fine catalogue of complaints truly! Have you any more?

Aristella. Yes, one thing more, which, with what indifference soever you may now regard me, ought not, methinks, to escape your consideration; you know I am far advanced in my pregnancy; perhaps too of a son;—and can you support the thoughts that an infant, born the lawful heir of your estate and name, shall be saluted, on his first seeing light, with the odious title of bastard?

Mutantius.

Mutantius. What will he be the worse, unless you expect to have so wise a child as to know what is said of him as soon as he comes into the world?

Aristella. Oh, Mutantius! Mutantius! this is cruel dealing.

She said no more, but wept bitterly. Mutantius, who it must be own'd has some good nature, seem'd much moved at seeing her thus, and having look'd on her some moments with a great deal of tenderness, bid her come to him: she obey'd, but advanced with the most sorrowful and dejected air; he pull'd her to him, made her sit upon his knee, and kissing away the tears, he spoke thus:

Mutantius. Come, my poor Aristella, do not be so foolish; you have no cause for weeping; you know yourself virtuous, and I know you are so; and have no need to be afflicted at the mistaken opinion others may have of you, especially as it is not to last always.

Aristella. If I were certain when this event would happen, even though it were much longer than I hope it will, I should wait with patience.

Mutantius. You must depend for that upon my love and honour; it is not in my power to assign the day and hour. To deal sincerely with you, I have been a railer at marriage, have refused offers of that nature as much above my expectations as I was above yours, and I cannot all at once submit to be pointed at for a husband, and hear people laugh, and cry out, that I had thrown myself away: but of this, my dear, you may assure yourself, that I will endeavour to get rid of these scruples as soon as possible; in the mean time, I will give you as much of my company as can be spared from business, and other attachments which are not to be dispensed with;—I came on purpose to devote this whole day to you; drive me

not from you by your discontent; kiss me, and give me your promise that you will be entirely easy.

She comply'd readily with the first part of this injunction, and said she would do her best to perform the other. But by what I had now seen of the behaviour and disposition of Mutantius, I found reason to believe it would be yet a great while before he would bring himself to make a declaration of his marriage; so resolved not to take the trouble of any farther inquiries, but wait till common sense should give me intelligence of it. This event, however, happened much sooner than I expected; but was brought about by an accident which excited the extreme pity instead of congratulations: the unfortunate Aristella was not born to enjoy a happiness she so ardently had wish'd for, and so long been made to hope for; death alone had the power to give what life in vain had waited for; and the same breath which told me Mutantius had acknowledged her to be his wife, informed me also that she was no more.

Aristella, on her leaving the country, was charged with letters and some little presents from Mrs. Beechly to her two sisters in London; but being hindered from executing this commission in person, by the obligation Mutantius had lain her under, she sent what was intrusted to her care by a porter, accompanied with a little billet from herself; in which she told them, that an affair of the utmost consequence kept her at present from seeing them, but that she hoped to do so in a short time, and would then acquaint them with the reasons for having absented herself; and begg'd they would entertain no unfavourable thoughts of her conduct in this point.

As she was circumstanced, it was not in her power to have acted otherwise; yet what satisfaction

faction could such a letter give the two sisters? For a girl to banish herself from her kindred, without acquainting them with the motive, or the place to which she was retired, had a right to raise in them conjectures of the worst sort: they were distracted at the thoughts of her supposed ruin, and spared no pains to find her out, in order to bring her home, and snatch her from the shame they imagined she was involved in. Fruitless was their search for a long time; but chance, at length, discovered not only where she lived, but also that she was supported by a gentleman, and look'd upon as a kept-mistress. Quite enraged, they went to the house where she was lodged, and the door happening to be open, flew up stairs without any ceremony, and burst in upon her;—the sight of her, for her pregnancy was visible, added to the passions they were before inflam'd with; they reviled her in the most bitter terms, while poor Aristella, bound by the fatal oath she had taken, could say nothing in defence of her innocence, but what served to convince them more fully of her guilt. After having loaded her with opprobrious names, they left her with the same precipitation they had come, vowing never more to see or think of her as a sister.

Impossible it is for any one to conceive what the soul of Aristella suffered in this shocking scene; conscious of innocence, yet labouring under all the appearance of guilt; scandaliz'd, abused by those to whom she had been so dear, yet incapable either of defending her wrong'd virtue, or of blaming the severity she was treated with for her supposed fall:—every passion that can agitate the human heart at once assailed, and overwhelmed her with a variety of anguish; the force of which had such an effect upon her, as to cause an abortion that same night, and also to throw her into convulsions,

which in a few hours rendered her life despair'd of by all about her. In her intervals, between those fits which deprived her of all sense and motion, she cry'd out for Mutantius, ask'd where he was, and said she could not die without seeing him :—messengers were immediately dispatched to him ;—he came, seem'd greatly affected at the condition he found her in, but was much more so when he was inform'd what it was had thrown her into it. She was insensible on his entrance ; but recovering soon after, and seeing him so near her, catch'd hold of his hand, and with agonies inexpressible said to him,—‘ Oh, Mutantius ! you now will be rid of a tie you have been asham'd to own.’—‘ No, by Heaven ! (cry'd he) live, live, Aristella ; and I will declare to all the world that you are my wife, my lawful married wife.’

Whether it was this sudden rush of joy, on hearing him speak these words, that was too powerful for her weakness to sustain, or that the lamp of life was wasted by the agonies she had before endured, is altogether uncertain ; but she expired that moment, yielding up her last breath on the bosom of her too late repenting husband.—Love, pity, and remorse, now engross'd all his faculties ; he kept his promise, acknowledged her for his wife, had her entomb'd with great funeral pomp in his own family-vault, and paid all imaginable honours to her memory. Whether he will ever relapse into his former vanities, time alone must shew ; but at present, this once gay, thoughtless rover either is, or affects to be, lost to the joys he lately was so fond of ; behaves with the utmost indifference towards the fair sex ; seldom goes to any public place ; sees but little company at home ; and seems to be in every thing the very reverse of what he was,

As to the sisters of the unfortunate Aristella they were seized with the most deep affliction, when they came to know the sad effects their rash resentment had occasioned ; which may serve as a warning to all persons not to be over hasty in censuring actions, the true meaning of which the cannot immediately comprehend.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.





THE
INVISIBLE SPY.
BOOK VI.



CHAP. I.

I: dedicated entirely to the Ladies, as it relates an Adventure which nearly concerns them to take notice of.

A MONG all the numerous modes which the wantonness of luxury has of late years introduced into this kingdom for destroying of time, I know of none more fatal to the virtue and reputation of the female sex than masquerades; I mean, as that amusement is at present conducted. Indeed, when a select company of ladies and gentlemen agree among themselves, or are invited by some person of condition, to divert each other in such disguises as their several fancies shall make choice of, the case is widely different; for there, after passing a few hours in music, dancing, and pleasant raillery, according to the characters they assume, the masks are all thrown aside, and every one appears as he is; so that none will venture to talk or act beneath a vizard in such a manner as, when he stands reveal'd,

veal'd, will either reflect shame on himself, or give offence to those he has been entertaining. Masquerades, thus manag'd, I cannot but allow to be innocent amusements, as they serve to whet the wit, and exhilarate the mind.

But here, sorry am I to say it, the masquerade houses may with propriety enough be call'd shops, where opportunities for immorality, prophaneness, obscenity, and almost every kind of vice, are retail'd to any one who will become a customer; and at the low rate of seven-and-twenty shillings, the most abandon'd courtesan, the most profligate rake, or common sharper, purchases the privilege of mingling with the first peers and peeresses of the realm, and not seldom affronts both modesty and greatness with impunity. I perceive, to my great satisfaction, there are some ladies, who, touch'd with a just sense of what is owing to their dignity, are determin'd not to expose themselves any more in a place, where, if no worse ensues, the most licentious freedoms of speech, at least, are often offer'd to the chastest ears; and I am not without hope that the influence of their example will prevail on many others to do the same. For the benefit, however, of the unwary, and those who, by their small acquaintance in town, are ignorant of the customs of these dangerous amusements, it will not be amiss to relate an adventure which I was witness of, and may serve as a warning to all who are truly innocent, and desire to remain so.

Alexis and Matilda were the son and daughter of two gentlemen who lived near Newcastle. They had loved each other even before either well knew what was meant by the passion; and as their understanding ripen'd, their inclinations increased: hope, for some time, gild'd the prospect of their wishes; but, when they least expected, a stop was put to the consummation by an unfortunate disa-

greement between their parents. Alexis was forbid to see Matilda, and Matilda ever to think on Alexis; but these commands had little authority over hearts so fondly enamour'd as theirs: they form'd the most romantic contrivances to keep alive the flame with which each had inspired the other; some of which succeeded so well, as to enable them to continue an intercourse by letters, and even to gain private interviews. It was the father of Alexis who of the two had been most refractory; and he dying a short time after, the young gentleman found means to reconcile matters so effectually with the parents of Matilda, that they at length consented to give her to him, and completed the happiness of the equally loving and beloved pair.

Matilda, whose every care, hope, and joy, had all been center'd in her dear Alexis, had nothing now to wish beyond what she was in possession of; and Alexis thought himself so bless'd, that he even defied the power of fortune to give him any cause of disquiet.—Fatal security!—how little dependance for the future is there on the present good! They had not long enjoy'd the sweets of this so much admired union, before Matilda, who had never been in London, express'd a curiosity to see it:—Alexis, proud to embrace every opportunity of giving her pleasure, immediately took the hint, and told her he was ready to conduct her there as soon as she pleased. Accordingly they set out, and arrived in London about September; Alexis took ready-furnish'd lodgings, in a handsome house near St. James's, for six months, in which time he thought he should be able to shew Matilda every thing worth her seeing in town.

Alexis had received his first precepts at Westminster school; and having no relations in London, his father requested me, by letters, to call some-
times

times at the house where he boarded, and have an eye over his behaviour : I did so ; and the advice I gave him being delivered not in a magisterial but friendly manner, the lad conceived a very great affection for me from that time, and has preserved it ever since : he made me the compliment of a first visit on his coming to town, told me how happy he was, and begg'd I would be no stranger to the fair person who had made him so. I accepted the invitation, and went the next day : on his presenting Matilda to me, I was struck with admiration ; for besides every thing that could constitute a perfect beauty, there was a sweet simplicity, and a chearful unaffected innocence, which shone thro' the whole, and brighten'd every grace.

As the sole excitement Matilda had to take a journey to London, was to gratify her curiosity with the sight of it, there was no eminent structure or place of note to which she was not conducted by her Alexis. A new scene of diversions open'd as the winter-season came on ; plays, operas, and masquerades now began to attract the attention : the two first of these amusements Matilda was not altogether a stranger to, having often seen somewhat like them acted by strolling companies in the country ; but she had not the least notion of masquerades ; and the little account Alexis was able to give her, making her more impatient to know what sort of entertainment they afforded, it may be easily supposed, that an indulgent a husband would not suffer her to continue long in suspense :—it may be too, that he had some curiosity of his own to gratify in this point, having, it seems, never been at a masquerade himself.

Tickets accordingly were purchased, and habits hired. I happen'd to make a morning visit the day they were to go, and found Matilda busy in ornamenting a little hat and crook : the moment I en-

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ter'd the room, she told me, with the greatest pleasure in her countenance, that she was to be at the masquerade that night, and was to assume the character of a shepherdess; I replied, she could not take upon her one more suitable to her youth and innocence.

I said nothing to them of my design; but when evening came, I equipp'd myself with a Domine, and hastened to that Babel of hurry and confusion; where it was no difficult matter to discover the persons I sought after, as I knew the dresses they were in. I soon distinguish'd the shepherdess, and the husband by the blue Domine I had seen lying on a table in his dining-room, and perceiv'd there were many eyes upon Matilda; for though her face was conceal'd, her shape and air had something in them sufficiently attractive. But there was one who above all the rest seem'd particularly attentive to her motions; he was in the habit of a huntsman, a character which, I afterwards had reason to say to myself, suited very well with the intentions he had in his head that night. Which way soever Matilda turn'd, he took care not to lose sight of her; but as she kept close to Alexis, neither he nor any one else had an opportunity of speaking to her. I hover'd as near them as I could without being taken notice of, and it gave me a good deal of diversion, to see the surprise this innocent country lady testified at hearing the freedom with which some people, who seem'd to be perfect strangers, accosted each other.

A gentleman crossing the room with his mask in his hand, was known to Alexis, who on sight of him cry'd out to Matilda, 'Look yonder; my dear, there is Mr. Freeman; I never heard of his being in town: I will just step and tell him where we lodge; do you sit here till I come back.' He then seated her on a bench, and went hastily after his friend, who had pass'd into another room:—I

now

now doubted not but the huntsman would snatch his opportunity of entertaining Matilda; but I lost sight of him in an instant; he vanish'd, as it were, from the place, and I saw him no more. The fair shepherdess, however, was not to remain neglected; I found several advancing towards her, one of whom was the most grotesque, as well as disagreeable figure I ever beheld; his stature was far from what could be call'd tall; but the circumference of his carcase exceeded that of any three men in the whole assembly: his legs look'd like the pillars of a church-porch, and, when he mov'd, were at such a distance from each other, that a boat of a moderate size might easily pass between them without being incommoded:—he had on the habit of a Turkish bashaw, which was the worst, indeed, he could have chose; his huge ears, discover'd by the shortness of his turban, hung upon his shoulders, as did the wallets under his chin upon his breast; in a word, he could have no deformity that the dress he was in did not shew to advantage.

This enormous creature had no sooner reached the place where Matilda sat, than he threw himself down by her on the bench, and accosted her with language which I should never forgive myself, nor expect to be forgiven by my readers, to repeat; but I was glad to find, by the whispers of some people behind me, that instead of a gentleman, as I at first took him for, he was no other than a bully at a noted brothel in Covent-Garden, and was known about town by the name of Lumpier-Hamnock. I cannot pretend to say, whether this fellow was encourag'd by any other person to behave to Matilda in the manner he did, merely to put her spirits into a hurry, or whether he was instigated to it only by his own impudence and brutality: but whatever it might be, the situation of that poor lady was greatly to be pitied;—she moved by little and

and little as far from him as the bench would give her leave; but he still follow'd, and would needs keep close to her, and persecute her with his ribaldry;—sometimes she got up, and look'd round to see for her husband, then sat down again, not daring to leave the place for fear of missing him; but all the time shewed tokens of the utmost agitation of mind.

At length the blue Domine appeared, on which she started from her seat, and running to him, cry'd,—‘Oh, my dear, I am glad you are come.’—He only replied, in a low voice,—‘Ay, ay,—let us be gone,’—and taking her by the hand, led her hastily away. I pleas'd myself with the thoughts of having seen Matilda safe under the protection of her husband, and was equally so, that he had discovered little approbation of the masquerade, by his leaving it at a time when the diversion was at its height, and more company coming in than going out.

But the satisfaction I enjoy'd in both these points vanish'd in a moment: Alexis return'd, his mask was now off, and he pass'd directly to the place where he had left Matilda,—then started back;—confusion and surprise overspread his face; he threw his eyes wildly round the room, then ran through every part of it, and without considering how much he expos'd himself to the ridicule of that giggling assembly, ask'd first of one, and then of another, if they had seen a shepherdess in green and silver, and if they knew what was become of her. This struck me with infinite concern, as it made me know Matilda had been deceived by the sight of the blue Domine, and in spite of my unwillingness to let him see I had come to a place where I had refused to accompany him, was just stepping forward to inform him of what had happen'd, when a lady hearing his enquiries said, ‘Sir,

‘ the

‘ the lady I saw with you in the dress you mention,
‘ went away a little while ago with a gentleman
‘ in a blue Domine, much the same as your own.’
On which he cried out, ‘ Oh Heavens ! what
‘ curst mistake is this !’

In uttering this exclamation, he flew out of the room like lightning, without staying to thank the lady for her intelligence : — I followed as fast as I could, and found him at the door of the house, encompassed with hackney coachmen, chairmen, and link-boys, among whom he was vainly endeavouring to get some account of his lost shepherdess : one of them, it seems, had said, he saw a lady in the habit he described, go into a coach with a gentleman, but could tell nothing either of the figure of the coach, or where it was ordered to drive. Finding no information could be gained in the place where he was, he withdrew from the crowd, as I suppose, to consider what method he should pursue ; for he continued in a fixed posture for two or three minutes, leaning against some rails before an adjacent house. My heart bled for him, and if I had been capable of offering him either advice or consolation, would not have kept at the distance I did ; but the accident that had happened was without a remedy, and I had often observed, that to preach up moderation in the first gusts of passion, served but to inflame it more.

I thought there were no measures he could take that night ; yet imagining he had something in his head, was desirous of seeing what event his cogitations would produce. I therefore laid hold of the opportunity I now had of stepping behind the cover of a hackney-coach in waiting, and girded on my Belt of Invisibility, which I always carried in my pocket, in case any thing should fall in my way to give me occasion to make use of it. The influence of my valuable gift had but just taken effect by
being

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being warm upon my body, when Alexis roused himself out of his reverie, and walked very fast up the street; I kept pace with him 'till he came to the house where he lodged; the door being opened by his own footman, who sat up for him, — ‘ Is my wife come home,’ cried he? The fellow answering in the negative, and seeming somewhat surprized at this question, he threw himself into the parlour, saying to himself, ‘ How mad a hope did I entertain, that she might have found some means to escape the hands of her ravisher, and been here before me! — No, no, ’tis impossible; the villain doubtless will secure his prey:—curs’d, curs’d masquerade, invented by the fiends for the destruction of virtue!’

While he was thus speaking, he tore off his Domine, with agonies not to be expressed, and stamped it under his feet; then, turning to his servant, went on thus:

Alexis. ‘ William, your mistress is run away with, stolen from me by some villain in a Domine like my own; she is lost for ever, unless immediately recovered; fly this minute to every tavern and bagnio you can think on; describe her habit; enquire if such a one with a person in a blue Domine entered there: begone this instant, while I run to a justice of peace, and get a warrant to search in all suspected places.’

William. What part of the town, sir, do you think it most likely I shall hear of her?

Alexis. Alas! I am as ignorant of that as you; but all parts must be searched; fly then, good William; and, do you hear? ask every hackney-coachman you meet with, if he set any such persons down, and where:—away, I say, stay not to consider;—a moment may confirm her ruin and my dishonour.

The

The fellow obeyed without making any farther reply; but, I perceived by his countenance, was not very well contented with the errand he was sent upon; and Alexis went out of the house at the same time he did, in order to have recourse to a magistrate in this exigence, as he had said he would. I had no inclination to follow either master or man, on an expedition which promised so little success; therefore made all the haste I could to my own apartment, very much fatigued in body, yet much more so in mind, at the unfortunate mistake poor Matilda had fallen into, and which I had all the reason in the world to fear would be attended with the most dreadful consequences.



CHAP. II.

Contains the Conclusion of a Narrative, which I am certain there is not one Person in the World who can read without being filled with the most poignant Remorse, unless he is as dead to all Sense of Humanity as of Honour.

MY impatience to know if Matilda was yet come home, or if the researches of Alexis had gained him any information concerning her, made me resolve to go to his lodgings in the morning; but whether I should make this visit in my Visible or Invisible capacity, I was for some time at a loss; — at last, it seemed most eligible to appear in *propria persona*, as if I came only to ask some questions concerning the masquerade, and how they approved of that diversion, as it was the first time they partook of it; and also to take no notice of my being apprized of any thing that had happened there, unless he related it to me himself, which I did not much doubt of his doing. Accordingly I went

went, and upon my entering into the dining-room, Alexis ran to me, and began the recital of his misfortune in this pathetic exclamation: ‘ Oh, my friend, I am undone, and ruined for ever! — the author, giver, and partaker of all my happiness is lost! torn from me by some lascivious, some inhuman villain; and him whom yesterday you beheld the most blest of men, you now see the most accursed, and most wretched of all created beings.’

He then proceeded to inform me, as well as the distraction of his thoughts would give him leave, of the method he had taken for the recovery of his lost treasure; how he had passed the whole night and that morning in search of her, and that all his enquiries had been fruitless.

I then advised him to put an advertisement in the papers, describing the shape and stature of Matilda, with all the particulars of her dress, and offering a handsome reward to any one who should give information of the place at which she alighted out of a hackney-coach, in company with a gentleman in a blue Domine, between the hours of twelve and one. — ‘ This, you may do, said I, without mentioning any name, except that of the person to whom such intelligence may be brought; and ’tis very likely, either the coachman who carried her, or some one who might be about the door where she was set down, or even the servants of the house, will, for the sake of the gratuity, make that discovery which all your personal enquiries might not be able to obtain.’

I had no sooner ended, than a sudden dawn of cheerfulness gleamed upon his languid face, and to shew how much he approved of the thought, he took pen and paper, and immediately wrote in almost the same terms I had expressed it; specifying, at the same time, a coffee-house, where the reward should

should be paid on the requested intelligence being brought. After this, Nature, who will not be denied her rites, whatever vexations may intervene to rob her of them, spread a certain drowsiness upon his eye-lids, which I perceiving, persuaded him to favour, and on my promising to come again the same evening, he lay down on the bed, and left me at liberty to pursue my inclinations.

As I had now no engagement upon my hands, and had not been at White's for a considerable time, it was now my full design to go thither, imagining it might not be improbable but I might hear something of Matilda; but as I had some very good reasons not to appear in that place, I stepped into the first nook I found in my way, and put on my Belt of Invisibilty. I was but just equipped, and passing on to my intended route, when I saw a chair, with the curtains close drawn, stop at a few paces before me; I should have taken no notice of this, if one of the fellows had not lifted up the top, and told the person in it, that he had forgot whether it were the Red or the Green Lamps: the answer was given in a voice which I presently knew to be Matilda's; and if I had not so well remembered, as I did, the accents, I should have suspected it was no other than herself, by her saying, 'The Two Green Lamps.'

On finding it was she, the reader will easily believe I had more curiosity to see the interview between her and Alexis, than any thing else I could have in my head;—I followed the chair till it came to the house, and, on the door being opened, slipped in with it.—On her alighting, Mrs. Sober-ton, who was mistress of the house, ran out of the parlour, and was beginning to testify her joy at her return, tho' mingled with some demonstrations of surprize, to see her in the condition she was, which, indeed, was deplorable enough; her head without
any

any other covering than a handkerchief carelessly tied over her dishevelled hair, her garments torn, her eyes swelled with tears, every feature distorted, and all the tokens of distraction and despair about her. She made no answer to what the good gentlewoman said, but, after throwing some money to the chairmen, ran hastily up into the dining-room, where, flinging herself on a settee, she cried out, 'Where is Alexis?'—To which Mrs. Soberton, who had followed as well as myself, replied,—'Oh, madam, you cannot imagine what trouble both he and all of us have had on your account.'

I know not whether that unhappy lady would have declared to Mrs. Soberton any part of what had befallen her or not; for Alexis, who either had not fallen asleep, or was easily awaked, heard his wife's voice, and came flying out of the chamber that instant; — Mrs. Soberton, discreetly judging that they might not chuse to have a third person witness of their discourse, went directly down stairs; but the Invisible remained, and his wonderful Tablets received the impression of the following dialogue between them:

Matilda. Oh, Alexis! why did you leave me?

Alexis. Why did you leave the place where I desired you to wait for my return?

Matilda. I stirred not from it but to follow you, as I then thought.

Alexis. Confusion! — How could you be so mistaken?

Matilda. Alas, I had no apprehension of the deception put upon me! his habit was exactly like yours; his stature the same; he spoke in a low voice; but if he had not, my spirits were in too much agitation at the impudence of a fellow who had but just before accosted me, to have distinguished the difference.

Alexis.

Alexis. Oh, my torn heart! — But say, — Who is the villain that betray'd you? — Where were you carried?

Matilda. Alas, the precautions he took have left me ignorant of both; and all I know is, that I am undone.

Alexis. Distraction! — undone, and not know by whom! nor even in what place! all means for my revenge barred up! Yet perhaps I may be able to discover something; speak therefore, — tell me in an instant all the particulars of the story.

Matilda. I will, though every word will stab me to the soul, and inflict anew the shock I have undergone.

Alexis. No preparations; be quick, and answer my demand at once.

Matilda. Have patience then; for while you look so terrible I cannot speak.

Alexis. You cannot think I would hurt you; speak then, and break at once the heart of thy wretched husband!

Matilda. Oh, which way shall I begin? — how end?

Alexis. Keep me not on the rack!

Matilda. Soon as I saw the counterfeit Alexis approach, I rose to meet him; and on his bidding me come, and stretching forth his hand, I gave him mine, glad to find myself conducted from that single crowd, which I had seen too much of to desire to continue any longer with; — we went into a coach, where I began to tell him how I had been affronted by an ugly huge man in a Turkish habit; but he made no answer either to that or any other idle prate I entertained him with, till the coach stopped, and he handed me into a house, the entry of which was full of men, who were running backwards and forwards with candles in their hands, and seemed very busy: I asked where we were going

ing. He still made no reply; but after a short whisper to one of the fellows, led me up stairs.

Alexis. 'Sdeath! why did you go? — Then was your time to have cried out for rescue!

Matilda. What! from my husband? I could not as yet know him from any other than yourself: I was, indeed, a little surprized at [this] behaviour; but imagined it was owing to some little whim you had taken into your head, on purpose to laugh at my simplicity. Being warm with having my mask on so long, I plucked it off as soon as we got into the room, but he clapped it on again, a man being then just entering with a bottle and glasses in his hand, which having set down on the table, he immediately withdrew: my conductor then bolted the door, and running towards me, said, — 'Now, my angel, I may feast my eye with all that heaven of beauty, which, while beneath a cloud, attracted my admiration; and you behold the man who, from this happy moment, devotes himself entirely to your charms.' — With these words he took off both mine and his own vizard; — I shrieked, and surely had fainted with the fright, if an equal proportion of rage had not kept up my spirits.

Alexis. What said he then?

Matilda. A thousand romantic lies, such as I have read in plays and novels, which I answered only with revilings, till perceiving my just scorn had no effect upon him, I had recourse to tears and entreaties; told him I was a married woman, that I had a husband dearer to me than my soul, and by whom I was as much beloved, and conjured him not to detain me.

Alexis. Did not this move him?

Matilda. Oh no, not in the least; the audacious wretch but laughed at this remonstrance, — said that I was a fool, and knew not the true interest

terest of my sex, but that he would instruct me better, and make me happy tho' against my will.

Alexis. Execrable dog! but go on.

Matilda. You may easily believe, that he who could speak such words would also accompany them with actions of the same nature: — I resisted all I could the indecent liberties he took,—called Heaven and earth to my assistance, but in vain; — I was at last overpowered. — In the midst of tears, reproaches, swoonings, he effected his brutal purpose, and made me the most miserable of women.

Alexis. Most miserable indeed! — After this, I suppose, he would have suffered you to depart?

Matilda. Can you think me vile enough to continue one moment in the presence of that detested monster, when I was at liberty to leave him? — This indeed is cruel. — Oh Alexis! I hate myself for what I have been compelled to suffer; do not you hate me too.

Alexis. Oh, 'tis too much for man to bear! — Yet, one thing more, Matilda; describe, as near as possible, the features and complexion of this inhuman ravisher.

Matilda. Alas! the horror I was in from the first moment I found myself in the power of a stranger hindered me from taking any great notice; — all I can say is, that he had dark eyes, a clear and ruddy skin, and though his behaviour rendered him odious to me, with others I believe he may pass for handsome.

Alexis. Young, I suppose?

Matilda. About five or six-and-twenty; as far as I can judge.

Alexis. Had he the appearance of a man of rank and fortune?

Matilda. Every thing I saw about him, which properly belonged to himself, bespoke him such; —but

— but doubly disguised.—Did you not take notice of an huntsman at the masquerade ?

Alexis. Yes, and remember he always kept near us. Was he the ravisher ?

Matilda. The same ; he told me he had his eye upon me from the first moment I came in, and when he saw you left me, ran and procured a Domino as like yours as he could get, in hopes I might be, as, alas ! I really was, deceived by that fatal habit.

Alexis. 'Tis well ; I may perhaps hunt him.

The eyes of Alexis seemed to flash fire while he uttered these words ; after which he stood musing for some time, — then turning to his wife, who still sat weeping in the same posture she had thrown herself into at his entrance, spoke thus to her :

Alexis. Rise, Matilda ; retire to your chamber, and endeavour to compose yourself to rest.

Matilda. What ! so early ? — 'tis not yet six o'clock.

Alexis. No matter ; your condition requires it ; you have waked too long, therefore, pray go.

Matilda. Will you come too ?

Alexis. Do not expect me ; I have much to think upon, and must be alone ; there is a fermentation in my mind which must have time to settle ; — to-morrow I may be at more ease ; — I pray you then to give me liberty this night.

With this she took a candle and withdrew ; but with a look and gesture so truly pity-moving, that if a painter had been to draw the picture of Despair, he could not have copied from an original more striking.

He then called for Mrs. Soberton, told her his wife had been very much frightened, and was indisposed, so begged she would assist her in any thing she might stand in need of. She made no reply,

but

but went out of the room, I suppose, to do what he requested of her : I was about to follow her, but seeing Alexis put on his wig, which he had plucked off when he went to lie down, thought he was going on some expedition which might be worth my taking the pains to explore : to this end I slipped down stairs while he was taking up his sword and hat, got out of the house before him, divested myself of my belt, became visible, and met him some few paces distant. I told him I was returning to his lodgings, according to my promise, and affected some surprize at seeing him abroad : he seemed pleased that he had not missed me, and repeated in a few words the sum of what I have been relating ; adding, that he now flattered himself with being able to trace out the person who had injured him, by the description Matilda had given of him ; and then intreated I would be so good as to accompany him in the search he was about to make ; to which request I readily consented.

I found his scheme was, to enquire among those people who let out dresses for the masquerade, if any account could be given of a gentleman, who the night before had hired first the habit of a huntsman, and afterwards a blue Domine. The thing, indeed, seemed feasible enough in itself, though it did not answer expectation. We went to several shops without receiving the least information ; and all we could learn was, that a gentleman, habited like a huntsman, had come in a very great hurry for a blue Domine, which had not been returned till about half an hour before our coming, but the name or quality of the person who hired it, the woman protested she knew nothing of. Alexis then demanded, somewhat hastily, who it was had brought it back : she smiled both at this interrogatory, and the manner in which it was made, and replied, that she was talking to customers at that

me in the shop; but if she had been less engaged, she should scarce have taken any notice: — ‘For,’ said she, ‘provided we have our goods again, and are paid for the use of them, it is not our business to examine farther.’

Here ended the fruitless search of Alexis: — he had now no shadow of hope for discovering the ravisher, but in the advertisement I had persuaded him to get inserted in the news-papers; and his despair became so outrageous, that it was with much difficulty I prevailed upon him to go home. I went with him, fearing, if he was left alone in the street, he might be guilty of some extravagancy. It was one of the most fine frosty nights I had ever seen; and while we were knocking at the door, he looked up towards the sky, and, with a voice denoting the extremest bitterness of heart, burst into this exclamation: — ‘How many thousand twinkling stars are there, yet not one among them all a friend to me, or poor undone Matilda!’

I went home with him, but privately gave William a caution not to go to sleep, but keep near his master, and be attentive to all his motions, in order to prevent any fatal effect of the present distraction of his mind. I then went home, but with an anxiety for this truly worthy, though ill-fated pair, that made me quit my bed very early next morning, with a resolution to exert my utmost endeavours for the mitigation of their sorrows, and, if possible, to reconcile Alexis to a misfortune which was without a remedy; but unluckily for my design, a person came to speak with me about some business which detained me till almost twelve o’clock.

On my arrival at the place where I so much wished to be, I found Alexis just come in before me: he appeared with a countenance much more

com-

composed than the night before, but very pensive and melancholy: he presently acquainted me, however, with the occasion of his having been abroad; — it was this: — He told me he had passed the whole night in considering how he should act in relation to Matilda, and finding it a thing inconsistent with his honour to suffer her to remain in town after what had happened, he resolved to send her immediately into the country, and was just returned from hiring a post-chaise for that purpose. The reason he gave for his proceeding in this manner, was as follows: — ‘ She cannot remain here, and be shut up; she must appear sometimes; and who can tell but that in some unlucky minute she may be seen by the very villain who has ruined her, and who, either through curiosity, or the desire of renewing the gratification of his vicious flame, may discover whose wife she is, and wherever he sees me, point me to his lewd companions for the wretch he has made me.’

I had nothing to offer in opposition to what he said on this score; for indeed I thought it very proper they should both retire into the country; so replied, that I was glad I had called that morning, otherwise I should not have had the opportunity of wishing them a good journey: — to which he hastily rejoined, — ‘ I shall not go.’ — ‘ How?’ cried I, somewhat surprised, ‘ do you send away Matilda, and stay behind yourself?’ A deep sigh was the first answer he gave: but the testimony of his discontent was presently succeeded by these words: ‘ Yes, my friend, she must go with-
 out me; two days ago, nothing was so precious to me as her presence. I lived, indeed, but in her sight; every glance, every look she gave, shot pleasure to my heart: — but now, alas! the happy moments are fled, and I can regard her as

‘ no other than the ruined reliques of the woman
 ‘ once so dear to me.’

It was in vain I represented to him, that as I doubted not but he was perfectly convinced of the purity of Matilda’s mind, he ought not to love her less for the violence her person had sustained : he owned the justness of my reasons, but could not prevail [on himself to be governed by them ; and when I urged the cruelty of sending her so long a journey without any companion to alleviate her sorrows, he made me this reply : — ‘ She does not go alone ; her waiting-maid, who, soon after our arrival in town, was obliged to be removed on account of the small-pox, is now quite recovered, and came home last night : this girl has attended Matilda for some years, and I know will be very careful of her.’

While we were discoursing, the chaise came to the door, on which Alexis called to have the luggage put in, and his wife to make herself ready. I asked him, if he thought it proper I should take my leave of Matilda before her departure ? He replied, that it was a ceremony which he believed she would gladly be dispensed with from receiving, in her present unhappy situation ; but begged I would stay in the dining-room till he had dispatched this disagreeable affair. With these words he went out of the room, and I remained where I was : in less than half a quarter of an hour, looking through the window, I saw the disconsolate Matilda go out of the house, supported on one side by Alexis, and on the other by her attendant. I could not see her face ; but her motions, and the distracted air with which she threw herself into the chaise, were enough to convince me of the extreme wretchedness of her condition.

Alexis returned to me in a situation little less pity-moving, yet could not my heart altogether
 absolve

absolve him for this last part of his behaviour to Matilda: it was now, however, a time to apply rather balms than corrosives to his bleeding and despairing mind; I therefore said every thing in my power to administer consolation to him, but all my endeavours that way were unsuccessful; and though I staid with him the greatest part of the day, had the mortification to leave him as I found him.

Oh! had the dark unknown beheld the sad effects his wild inordinate desires produced, he surely could not have sustained the shock, but must have revenged upon himself the mischiefs he had brought upon two worthy persons, so lately blessed, so truly loving and beloved!



CHAP. III.

Consists of some farther Particulars relative to the preceding Adventure; with two Letters wrote by that unfortunate Lady to her Husband in her Exile.

I Am very much afraid, that Alexis will stand but little justified in the opinion of my fair readers for his conduct towards Matilda: they will doubtless say, that the love he pretended to have for her, had taken but a shallow root in his heart, when it could be shaken by a misfortune which she had no way contributed to bring upon herself. They will, perhaps, also add, that after she had with so much simplicity, some may think folly too, revealed to him the whole of what had befallen her, it was not only unkind, but highly ungenerous and cruel in him to abandon her to despair, at a time when she had so much need of the tenderest compassion and consolation.

I must confess, indeed, that these accusations have the strongest appearance of reason on their

' the aid of tenderness, will not permit you to hate
 ' me, to throw me off for ever, for my person
 ' having sustained a violence, to which I am per-
 ' suaded you are convinced my mind was incapable
 ' of consenting. I will believe, that you feel all
 ' my woes, participate in my anguish, and that my
 ' pen ought rather to flow with words of conso-
 ' lation than reproach. Yet if it is ordained that
 ' we must both be wretched, let us be wretched
 ' together; let us mingle our tears, and inter-
 ' changeably echo back each other's sighs; let us
 ' indulge despair, recal the memory of those bliss-
 ' ful hours we once enjoyed; compare the present
 ' with the past, and join in curses on the base, the
 ' inhuman author of our woes! But whither does
 ' my inconsiderate passion lead me? — Does it be-
 ' come the love, the tenderness, the duty of a wife,
 ' to wish you should partake my ruin? — No; —
 ' since I can no longer contribute to your happi-
 ' ness, rather forget, renounce, abandon me for
 ' ever! — Yet, oh! 'tis hard; — my brain grows
 ' wild on the reflection; — I can proceed no far-
 ' ther. — Pity me, my most dear, my most adored
 ' Alexis! pity, — oh! pity,

' The undone,

' The lost MATILDA!

' P. S. If these distracting lines have any power
 ' to move you, — if any remains of soft com-
 ' passion towards me still dwell within your breast,
 ' write to me by the first post; — fix, I beseech
 ' you, my uncertain fate. — Oh, that I should live
 ' to stand in need of entreaties to hear from you!

When Alexis shewed me the above, he seemed
 all dissolved in a flood of love and tenderness; yet,
 I believe, the answer he sent to it was dictated in
 term

terms not altogether so satisfactory to Matilda as the present disturbance of her mind required. Here follows the second melancholy epistle of that unfortunate lady.

‘ My for ever dear, tho’ unkind ALEXIS,
 ‘ WITH what anxiety have I watched the arrival of the post! how counted the tedious minutes as they glided on! how trembled between hope and fear on every knock given at the gate, while in expectation of a letter from you! — at last it came: — but, oh! I am not more at ease! Wherefore, Alexis, do you keep me in this cruel suspense?—I asked no impossibilities of you, desired you natto love me still;—I only begged the decision of my fate; and sure, that is not a request too much for me to make, or you to grant!

‘ My father, uncles, all my kindred and acquaintance, nay, our very servants, stand amazed to see me here without you; they perceive my altered looks, and with officious love enquire into the cause. All the answer I can make, is, that the air of London not agreeing with my constitution, I hurried back before some business you had in town would permit you to return. These excuses may pass current for a time, but cannot do so long: I conjure you, therefore, by all you have to hope, or fear, or wish, not to expose yourself and me to conjectures which cannot be to the advantage of either of our characters. Pronounce my doom, say that you will return, and live with me, in all appearance, as before; or scruple not to let me know you have resolved on an eternal separation, that I may retire at once to some dark corner of the world, and shut myself up from pity and contempt. I know, this ought to have

‘ been thought upon before you obliged me to remove from London ; but both of us were in too much confusion at the time of parting to give our cooler reason room to operate : we have since, however, had leisure to reflect on what was proper to be done in our unhappy circumstances ; and I flatter myself, you will not think me too presuming in being the first to mention it.

‘ Oh, Alexis ! imagine not that when I urge you to this eclaircissement, I am so vain as to sooth my fond heart with a belief, that since the dreadful accident you ever can love me as before ; —no, I rather expect my sentence will be that of an everlasting banishment ; perhaps it is already signed within your breast, and the compassion you have for me alone delays the execution. If this should be the case, — throw aside that cruel mercy which conceals it : — grief and despair have given me fortitude to bear the worst of ills ; and sure there can be none half so dreadful to me as seeing you no more ; — so much the better for my eternal peace, as it will the sooner rid me of the burthen of a hated life ; but I will trouble you no more than to renew my petition of knowing in your next letter what it is you have in effect decreed for the innocently criminal

‘ MATILDA.’

‘ P. S. Your old acquaintance and fellow-collegian, Mr L——, has just now sent to enquire when you are expected down ; — he designs, it seems, to set up at the next general election for the borough of *****, and greatly depends on the interest you have in that place ; — I suppose you will shortly receive a letter from himself on the occasion : oh ! may the
‘ calls

‘ calls of friendship give weight to those I have
 ‘ mentioned, and influence you to return!’

I happened to be with Alexis at the time of his receiving this : he first read it to himself, then communicated it to me ; and when he had finished, cried out with an extraordinary emotion, — ‘ Poor
 ‘ Matilda ! unhappy charming woman ! with what
 ‘ enchanting eloquence does she plead against herself ! how sweetly labour to oppose what she most
 ‘ wishes to obtain !’

As I found the strongest reason in the arguments urged in Matilda’s letter, I must confess that I was at a loss to comprehend what he meant by speaking in this manner, therefore desired he would explain himself, which he immediately did in these terms : ‘ O, friend, the more I discover of her merit, the less I am able to forget the violation of
 ‘ her honour ; I must cease to love her as I do,
 ‘ must bring myself to look upon her with the
 ‘ same indifference that most husbands do upon
 ‘ their wives, before I can support, with any tolerable degree of patience, the thoughts that another has possessed her.’ Thus did he always talk whenever we were alone ; and had Matilda known his sentiments, I believe it would be a moot-point whether she would not rather have chose a separation than to live with him, after he had reduced himself to such a state of insensibility.

He now indeed began to give great indications, that he had nothing more at heart than to lose all remembrance, not only of the injury done to Matilda, but of herself also. By very swift degrees he became the reverse of what he was before his going to that fatal masquerade : the pleasures of the bottle, and the conversation of the looser part of womankind, divide too much of his time between them ; and he seeks in riots and debaucheries his

relief from melancholy. I am told, however, that he is at present preparing to set out for ***** : but what satisfaction can the virtuous Matilda receive from his return thus transformed, thus debased in morals and behaviour from the man she had so dearly loved, and who was once so worthy her esteem ?

How sad a reverse have a few weeks made in the condition of this lately happy pair ! — Surely the wretch, for so I must call him, be he of what degree or rank soever, who for the sake of gratifying the fleeting pleasure of a moment, has brought this ruin on them, ought never to be forgiven in this world, whatever a sincere contrition, if he is capable of it, may entitle him to in the next.



CHAP. IV.

The Author having found Something in his Rambles, which he supposes may be of Value to the Owner, condescends to take upon him the Office of a Town-Cryer ; but waves the Ceremony of the great O-Yes.

HAppening one morning to wake more early than ordinary, I quitted my bed, and the weather being fine, and my humour more inclined to seriousness than gaiety, I took a little walk into Hyde-Park, not with the least expectation of making any discovery of other people's affairs, but merely to think of my own with more liberty than I could do at home. I met no living creature in my way, except some birds that perched upon the twigs of the leaveless trees, and in melodious notes chanted forth praises to the approaching spring : these rather indulging meditation, I passed slowly on by the side of the Serpentine River, where my eyes were attracted

tracted with the sight of a white fatten pocket lying just before me; I suppose it might have been dropp'd from some Lady's side the night before, for on my taking it up, I found it extremely damp with dew. I look'd upon this as a lawful prize, and that I had a right to keep it, at least 'till I could find somebody that had a better title; I therefore tied it up in my handkerchief, and after having finished my walk took it home with me, where my impatience did not suffer me to continue long without examining it. I shall give a faithful inventory of all the particulars, reserving only one in petto, in order to prevent being imposed upon by any fictitious claimant.

Money being the chief idol of mankind, I shall give that the preference, and begin with the purse, which had in it five gold ducats, a leaden French shilling, a bent half crown, and a medal of the Duke of Cumberland in copper, very curious, but by some accident had been crack'd, and the impression in several parts pretty much erased. The next thing that presented itself was a very small pocket-book, which I shall forbear to describe, as well as make any mention of the memorandums it contained, to any person in the world but to the lady who wrote, and shall come to demand them. There was also a chrystal smelling-bottle half full of Sal Armoniac, a tortoise-shell snuff-box, rimm'd with gold, and a naked Venus painted on the inside.

But the most valuable part of this cargo, at least according to my opinion, was some papers, not Bank-bills, but letters, and other writings more deserving the attention of the public, and which I shall make no scruple to insert, as they gradually fell under my inspection; especially as all of them having been sent under covers, which were not in the packet, the name of the lady to whom they were directed can only be guessed at.

LET-

L E T T E R I.

‘MADAM,

‘I NOW send you the catalogue you have so often requested; but intreat you will be so good as not to let any one soul in the world know you had it from him who has the honour to be, with the greatest respect, &c.’

The name subscribed to this had been torn off, either by design or accident; but the paper which accompanied it was perfect and entire. Here follows a faithful transcript.

A CATALOGUE of some very scarce and curious pieces, in Prose and Verse, all wrote by some of the most eminent Hands.

1. **T**HE Art of Pleasing in Conversation. An Heroic Poem.—By the E— of C—.

2. An Essay on Power. Wrote originally in High Dutch, and now translated by a person of distinction into English.—Bound in red Turkey, finely gilt and lettered.

3. The Virtues of Carmine, with a Recipe how to prepare it with success.—*Probatum est*.—By the C— of C—. Gilt back and letter’d.

4. Patient Grizel. A Poem in six Cantos.—By the real C— of C—. Bound in Calf, very plain.

5. The Politician defeated. A Novel. In three Parts.—By the E— of E—. Stitch’d in blue Paper.

6. The Croaker. A Tragi-comical Farce of one Act.—By L— R—.

7. Cookery Improv’d, after the Epicurean stile.—By a Club of Gentlemen. In sheets.

8. The

8. The Chaste Maid ; or, A New Way to amuse the Town. — A Comedy of three Acts, each sufficient for a Winter Night's Entertainment. — By the facetious H— F——, Esq;

9. Rules to chuse a Wife ; shewing the Absurdity of all those generally observed.—By Sir J— C——. In Boards.

10. A Philosophical Definition of Card-Craft, upwards of forty years compiling. — By the very learned and most ingenious Professor, Mr H——e. Stitched in gilt paper.

11. Frugality. A Poem. In nine Cantos. — By the C—— of B——. Bound in Vellum.

12. A Collection of Jests and Merry Phrases, to keep young People's Heads from aching with more laborious Studies. — By a Tutor in the modish Sciences. Finely bound in blue Turkey, gilt back and lettered.

13. Try before you Buy. A Poem after the manner of Hudibras. — By the E— of R——. In Boards.

14. The Charms of Novelty. A Pindaric Essay. —By Miss C——, in Sheets.

15. The Pleasures of Matrimony ; or, Who would not be a Husband ? A Farce. — By L— V——. Stitched, and very much sullied with often reading.

16. A Dissertation on Flies Eggs.—By the President of a learned Society. In Boards,

17. Laugh and Lie Down. A Ballad Opera of three Acts. — By L— P——. Stitched in blue Paper.

18. An Essay to prove that true Honour is always concomitant with good Sense. — By the E— of O. Bound in plain Turkey.

19. Conjugal Love. A Pastoral, of one continued Scene. — By the E— of N——. Printed

on a new Elzevir letter, and neatly bound without tawdriness or affectation.

20. The Patriot. A secret History. — By G— D—, Esq; Bound in clouded Calf.

21. The Double Dealer ; or, The Westminster Disappointment. A Farce of two Acts. — By Sir G— V—. Stitched in Cap Paper.

22. An Eulogy on Apostacy. — By L— G—. Bound in Calf, and gilt back.

23. Love in a Bottle. A Poem, in three Cantos. — By the E— of M—. Stitched in blue Paper.

24. Redivivus; or Old Age and Gallantry reconciled. A humorous Farce of one Act. — By the E— of H—. Stitched.

25. An Exhortation to Hospitality to Foreigners, even though it should happen to be destructive to the Liberties of the Natives. — By L— T—, as he delivered it at the Hay Market. Bound in the French Taste.

26. Criticisms on the Play of — Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. — By L— P—. In Boards.

27. The Fox weary of Goose-hunting. A Fable. — By the D— of D—. Bound in Parchment.

28. The Lover's Catechism. A new Ballad.— By the celebrated Miss A—.

29. An Infallible Remedy for curing the Scotch Itch without Bleeding.—By the D— of A—.

30. The Beauties of Domestic Life, illustrated with Examples. A Pastoral Eclogue. — By the D— of B—. Neatly bound.

31. Love levels all ; or, A lucky Trip to Bath. An Epic Poem without any Episodes. — By C— B—. Printed on a half-worn-out letter, but very richly bound.

32. In-

32. Instructions for a Supplement to Arthur Collins's Peerage of England. — By L— L—. Stitched in Marble Paper.

33. Verses in Praise of Breeding. — By Miss W—.

34. True Magnificence. An Heroic Poem. — By the D— of M—. Finely bound.

35. Love in a Coach. A true Secret History. — By C— V—. Stitched.

36. Second Thoughts best. A Philosophical Treatise, dedicated to a Brother of the Horn. — By Mr W—. Bound in Sheeps Skin.

37. The Triumvirate of Converts; being a Series of Epistles on Moral and Religious Subjects, which passed between L— T—, C— G—, and Mrs C—. In Boards.

38. The Escape. A Satire. Inscribed to L— D— M—, by a Well-wisher to her Ladyship.

39. A Letter sent with a Side of Venison to the celebrated Mrs J— D—, in the Piazza, Covent Garden. — By L— T—.

40. A Short Treatise concerning Public and Private Charities, proving to a Demonstration, that the former are of much more Emolument to the Giver than the latter. — By L— E— J—. Curiously bound with a Register.

41. The Humiliation. A Poem. Addressed to the Inexorables. — By L— G— S—. Stitched.

42. A Prophecy that Votes for Members of Parliament will fall to no Price at the next Westminster Election. — By Sir W— Y—.

Having folded and replaced this paper in the pocket whence I had taken it, I proceeded to the other.

LETTER II.

‘ DEAR MADAM,

‘ IT must be confessed you are endowed with a
‘ courage and resolution superior to what most of
‘ your sex can boast of; but you must give me
‘ leave to say, at the same time, that in these af-
‘ fairs we men run much the greater hazards; in
‘ case of a discovery, our persons are liable to fall a
‘ sacrifice to the resentment of an injured husband,
‘ and our fortunes sure to be ruined by way of re-
‘ paration of his disgrace; whereas the worst you
‘ have to fear is a divorce. The laws are favour-
‘ able to wives: the portion you brought with you
‘ is either returned, or an annuity equivalent; and
‘ as for the little shame you sustain by such a pro-
‘ cedure, it is well atoned for by your being freed
‘ from the loathsome caresses of the man you hate,
‘ and at full liberty to pursue your inclinations
‘ with him you love.—Be assured, madam, I would
‘ venture much for the continuance of the blessing
‘ you permit me to enjoy; but I find the intercourse
‘ between us begins to be suspected, and you must
‘ therefore pardon me that I yield to necessity,
‘ and refrain my farther meetings with you, at
‘ least for the present. I was yesterday at court,
‘ and heard some whispers, that your jealous cox-
‘ comb would soon be sent abroad: if such a thing
‘ should happen, as I have some pretty good reasons
‘ to believe it will, I shall return with double tran-
‘ sport to your embraces; till then prudence obliges
‘ me to deny myself that happiness; but at how
‘ great a distance soever I keep my person, I beg
‘ you will do me the justice to believe my heart is
‘ always with you, and that I can never cease to be,
‘ with the greatest sincerity, &c.

‘ PHILETES.’

‘ P. S.

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‘ P. S. ‘ I would not have your harbour any unjust suspicions, either of me or your fair friend ; for upon my soul, I never had the least design upon her in the way you mean ; and you will find, whenever it is convenient for me to renew my devoirs to you, that I like no woman better than yourself. — Once more I bid you unwillingly adieu.’

LETTER III.

‘ DEAR CREATURE,

‘ YOUR Damon and my Strephon, as we call them, are both with me ; they have found out the most charming place that ever was for us to scamper to, whenever we can delude the eyes of our impertinent gaolers. If you can find any excuse to get loose from yours, the rendezvous agreed upon is the banks of the Serpentine River, just after sun-set, whence we are to follow our leaders where they shall please to conduct us. Lady Fillup has a route to-night ; you may tell your tyrant you are going there ; but why should I put pretences into a head so much more fertile than my own ? Fail not to come, however, if it be not a thing utterly impossible for human wit to accomplish ; but let us know your resolution by the bearer. I am, &c.

‘ CORINNA.’

‘ P. S. ‘ While I was writing the above, Damon, to shew either his love, or wit, or both, took up a pen, and employed it in the inclosed.’

To my Soul’s Treasure.

Fly, charmer, fly, — leave home-bred cares behind ;
With thoughts of coming joys fill all your mind ;
Let

Let smiling pleasure wanton o'er your face,
 And kindling transports brighten ev'ry grace;
 Each vein of mine beats high with love's alarms,
 Haste then, and lull me gently in your arms.

' I know I am a bad poet, but you will find me
 ' a better lover, and that your charms are capable
 ' of inspiring me with more fire than all the ladies
 ' of Parnassus put together. I am, &c.

' DAMON.'

The letter of Philetes, and that of Corinna and Damon, being dated on the same day, discovered to me that the lady who received them was not quite inconsolable for the loss of one lover, as she had another in store; and also that she failed not to comply with the invitation of Damon, and that she had dropped her pocket at the rendezvous appointed by Corinna.

I make no question but the inquisitive reader would be glad to know the name and rank of this so much admired lady; but as I can do no more, at most, than guess at either, I should be loth to impose my bare and uncertain conjectures upon the public, for fear of a mistake, and being guilty of the worst of wrongs, that of prejudicing the character of an innocent person. — I wish every one would pay as much regard as myself to what Shakspeare says on this occasion:

Good name, in man or woman,
 Is the immediate jewel of our souls:
 Who steals my purse, steals trash, 'tis something,
 nothing;
 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
 But he who filches from me my good name,
 Robs me of that which not enriches him,
 And makes me poor indeed.

Could

Could I have formed even the most distant supposition to what place Strephon and Damon had conducted their ladies, I doubt not, but my curiosity would have carried me thither, where my enquiries might perhaps have gained me the satisfaction of knowing how much of the night these inamoratos had passed together, and in what manner they had been entertained; but no mention being made of any thing farther than the place where they were to meet, I was obliged to content myself with what discoveries I had made, and so must the reader also.

I cannot conclude this chapter without an observation which has constantly occurred to me whenever any thing fell in my way of the kind I have been relating, which is this: As the wife has the honour of her husband in keeping, it seems to me a most ungenerous and cruel addition to the crime of wronging his bed, when by public indiscretion she exposes him to that contempt and ridicule which the world, though without the least shadow of reason or justice, is always sure to cast upon the husband of a transgressing wife.

I know very well, people are apt to say, that when a woman abandons herself to vice, she presently becomes utterly incapable of paying any regard to her own reputation, much less to that of her husband's; and that it appears a much greater matter of surprise when they see women, as it must be confessed many such there are, who, without being criminal in fact, behave in such a manner as to draw on themselves the severest censures. Though I must allow that this too frequently happens, yet I cannot agree in opinion with those who seem to wonder it should be so, and look upon it as a kind of inconsistency in nature; I rather imagine that guilt is more likely to inspire circumspection; — a woman who knows herself culpable,
I should

I should expect to be very careful not to do any thing in public that might cause suspicion of her being less reserved in private; whereas a consciousness of innocence, especially in a thoughtless disposition, may easily render a woman unguarded, and less observant of those decorums, which, though not essential to virtue, are doubtless necessary to reputation.



CHAP. V.

Turns chiefly upon the Subject of Education, and contains some few Things, which the Author is apprehensive will not be very agreeable to the Female Part of his Readers.

THE good or the ill fortune of our whole lives chiefly depends on the first bent given to our minds in youth. — Impressions made in our early years take a deep root within us; grow up with us to maturity, become part of ourselves, so that they may properly be called a second nature, and are seldom, if ever, totally eradicated. According to one of our English poets;

Children, like tender osiers, take the bow,
And as they first are fashion'd, still will grow.

For this reason it is that parents, unless they are very remiss indeed, take so much pride in the education of their children, bestowing on them every accomplishment befitting their rank and circumstances, and oftentimes more than will well agree with either: yet all this will not do; there are some previous steps to be taken, without which all the improvements we can make from the lessons of the most able masters, will never render us worthy the esteem of others, or truly happy in ourselves,
for

for any length of time. Pride, and an impatience of controul, are the first propensities discoverable in human nature : if these are humoured and indulged in their beginnings, which is indeed in our most early years, they will soon become too headstrong and too turbulent to be afterwards restrained and subjected to the government of reason, by any methods whatever that can be taken for that purpose : the first indications should therefore be carefully watched, and checked in every instance.

I smile to think what objections are commonly made, by some over-sord parents, to such a manner of proceeding. — If I am not mistaken, these two are the principal ; that to curb children too much is apt to break their spirits ; and that the world being so full of disappointments, that few people escape them when they come to maturity, it is pity the poor things should know sorrow before their time ; — to both which I take the liberty to make this reply :

First, As to what they call the breaking of the spirit. — The due decorum I would recommend, takes no more of the spirit from the young master or miss, than what is necessary to keep them from running into those follies and excesses, which, how excuseable soever in childhood, render them contemptible in riper years ; as the skilful gardener lops from his tender plant those superfluous branches which, if suffered to continue, would hinder it from growing to perfection — Then as to the second, — Every one knows the sorrows their little hearts are capable of feeling, make no lasting impression on them : they will cry one moment, and laugh the next : — the contradiction they meet with, will only make them sensible that they neither can nor ought to expect they are to have their will in all things ; and the trifling disappointments given them will enable them to sustain with fortitude those

those of more consequence which may hereafter possibly befall them. A boy is less liable to the danger of being spoiled by too much indulgence than a girl; because he is no sooner taken from the nursery, than he is either put out to school, or, if of a superior rank, under the inspection of a tutor.

I have the honour to be pretty nearly related by marriage to Lady Plyant, her late husband being my first cousin. — Decency obliges me to visit the widow sometimes: she is a very affable good-natured woman, and has, indeed, a greater share of understanding than her too great compliance with the customs of the age will permit her to make shew of. She keeps a prodigious deal of company, for which reason I see her much less frequently than otherwise I should do; but happening to pass by her house one day, when no coach or chair was in waiting there, I ventured to knock at the door, and was glad to be told she was alone: I had not, however, been with her above ten minutes, before two or three loud raps proclaimed the approach of some new guest, and presently after, a grave elderly lady was introduced. Lady Plyant received her with much politeness, and a great shew of friendship; and after the first salutations were over, and we had re-seated ourselves, said to her,

Lady Plyant. Dear Mrs. Loyter, I have not seen you this age, and have been quite unhappy in the want of you.

Mrs. Loyter. Dear Lady Plyant, the loss is wholly mine; but I have been so embarrassed; — my poor girl has been extremely indisposed.

Lady Plyant. Bless me! — Miss not well, and I hear nothing of it! — But I hope she is better.

Mrs. Loyter. Perfectly recovered, madam: she will have the honour of waiting on your ladyship this evening; she is gone to make a few visits, but
prayed

prayed heartily to find nobody at home, that she might follow me here the sooner.

Lady Plyant. How perfectly kind that was! — Well, she is a charming creature; you are the happiest woman in the world in having such a daughter:—I protest among all my acquaintance I do not know any young lady comes up to her; there is something so sweet, so engaging in every thing she does.

Mrs. Loyter. She is infinitely obliged to your ladyship: indeed I have taken a great deal of pains with her; for as I have no other daughter, I should never have forgiven myself if I had not used my utmost endeavours to form her mind so as to make her as agreeable as possible to her acquaintance.

Lady Plyant. Oh, madam, the world must allow you have; Miss is the darling of every body that knows her.

Mrs. Loyter. The girl has a great deal of good-nature, madam, and does not want a genius and capacity to mingle in conversation on almost any subject becoming a young lady to be acquainted with.

I had been upon the wing to take my flight almost from the moment Mrs. Loyter came in; but what was said in relation to her daughter determined me to stay till Miss arrived, in order to be convinced how far her person and behaviour corresponded with the high character had been given of her. At length Miss Loyter appeared, and I stretched my eye-lids to their full extent to take in all the charms I had heard she was possessed of: the girl, indeed, was well enough, but I could discover nothing extraordinary about her, nor did her eyes or air give her any indications of that capacity her mother seemed to boast of; but as I thought it unfair to give a verdict on mere appearances, I suspended my judgment on her understanding till I had more substantial proofs.

The discourse at first was only on where she had been, whom she had seen, and how such and such a lady was dress'd : I found Miss talk'd very learnedly on this subject, and therefore was not without hope of hearing something from her equally lively on others of more importance ; but none being started, I was compelled to listen to the several aninadvertions made by these three ladies on caps, flounces, and such-like. At last Miss happening to say that she had met Mrs. O—— in one of the visits she had been making, I presently catch'd up the word, and said to her, — ‘ Then, madam, I doubt not but some conversation pass'd, which you will do us the favour to repeat, as the lady you mention is perfectly acquainted with public affairs, and indeed reasons upon them very justly.’ To which she reply'd, ‘ So they say, sir ; but she was just going out when I came in ; and indeed I was heartily glad of it ; for I hate to hear a deal of stuff about things I know nothing of.’ As I had a good share in the ensuing part of this conversation, I shall, to avoid confusion, repeat my own words as if spoken by another person.

Author. Then, madam, you have no relish for politics ?

Miss. No, truly, sir : — What business have I with the transactions of kings, and princes, and parliaments ? It makes me sick to hear so much of wars, and treaties, and conventions, and taxes, and grievances, and such nonsense.

Author. I must confess, madam, the affairs of Europe are a little intricate at present, and may be puzzling to a lady's comprehension ; but I suppose you are not unacquainted with the histories of former times ?

Miss. Lord, sir, what have I to do with former

Author.

Author. Every one, madam, has to do with the annals of the country where they were born.

Mrs. Loyter. These things are quite out of my daughter's way ; but for all that, I can assure you, sir, she reads a great deal.

Author. It would be pity, indeed, madam, so fine a young lady should be altogether ignorant of books : I imagine therefore that Miss's genius soars to a higher pitch, the wonders of the Creation ; I make no question but she has read *Le Spectacle de la Nature*.

Mrs. Loyter. I believe not, sir. — Have you, my dear ?

Miss. Not I, truly ; — but I have heard enough of it : they say there are four volumes of it taken up with nothing but a description of trees, birds, beasts, fishes, and nasty insects.

Author. What do you think, madam, of Fontenelle's *Plurality of Worlds* ?

Miss. O hang it, I was never so disappointed in my life : I thought by the beginning, when I found a gentleman and a lady were taking their walk together by moon-light, some pretty adventure would have ensued ; but, good God ! the author has made them talk of nothing but planets, and the things that happen in the sky.

Author. I fancy then, Miss, romances and novels are chiefly your taste.

Miss. I hate romances, they are too tedious ; as for novels, I like some of them well enough, particularly Mrs. Behn's ; but I know not how it is, the authors now-a-days have got such a way of breaking off in the middle of their stories, that one forgets one half before one comes to the other.

Author. Digressions, miss, when they contain fine sentiments and judicious remarks, are certainly the most valuable part of that sort of writing.

Miss. I cannot think so, and I could wish the authors would keep their sentiments and remarks to themselves, or else have them printed in a different letter, that one might know when to begin, and when to leave off.

Author. I presume, Miss, you are fond of poetry?

Miss. Not very fond; I cannot say I ever read much of it.

I thought I had now sufficiently sounded the genius and capacity of this young lady, therefore ceased to engross her any longer to myself, and soon after took my leave, secretly wondering at the strange partiality of Mrs. Loyter, in regard both of herself and daughter. A few hours, however, made me begin to judge somewhat more favourably of these ladies: 'Though Mrs. Loyter,' said I within myself, 'is mistaken in believing she has been able to make her daughter pass for a wit, her endeavours, notwithstanding, may have had better success in other accomplishments more essential to her happiness: she may have made her a good economist, and perfectly acquainted with every thing requisite for the well managing a family.'

I had the more reason to imagine that this young lady was trained up in frugality and good housewifery, as I had been told that Mr. Loyter lived to the height of his income, that he saved no money, had several sons, the eldest of whom, after his decease, was to run away with the estate; so that it could not be expected the daughter would have any fortune to entitle her to a husband at all suitable to the appearance she made. But as I was always willing to be convinced whether my conjectures were right or wrong, I resolved to make an Invisible Visit to this family. Just as I came to the house, Mr. Loyter was going out, and the door being opened for him, I slipped in, and went up stairs: the old lady was sitting in the dining-room-
window

window with her spectacles on, very hard at work. Breakfast was but just over, as I found by the maid's removing the tea equipage, and Miss was gone up to dress; it seems; for she came down presently after, in the same form I had seen her at Lady Plyant's; she ran directly to the great glass, in order to examine how her petticoats hung at the bottom, and then turned to her mother, and seeing what she was about, said to her,

Miss. Lord, mamma! have you not done mending my tippet yet?

Mrs. Loyter. Indeed, my dear, it is past mending, you have torn the lace in twenty places, I believe, with those ugly pins in your stomacher; I wish you would take more care of your things.

Miss. Indeed I can't be a slave to my cloaths.

Mrs. Loyter. I would not have you, my dear; but this vexes me, because it is the only handsome tippet you have; you must even try to coax your father to give you a couple of pieces to buy you another, the first time you find him in a good humour; for I assure you, I have not a single guinea in the world.

Miss. Well, 'tis a shameful thing one has not money without asking for, when one has a fancy to any thing: but, mamma, can nothing be done with this lace?

Mrs. Loyter. It will never make up again in the shape it was; but I believe I may contrive to make a handsome tucker of it.

Miss. Oh, I shall like a tucker of it vastly; pray, mamma, do it as soon as you can.

Mrs. Loyter. Where are you going, my dear?

Miss. I am only going to the next street to Lady Lovetoy's, to ask if Miss will take a walk with me in the Park.

Mrs. Loyter. Do not stay too long; your father brings company home to-day, and we are to have

a great dinner. Mr. Blossom, and his son, just come from the university, are to be here, so I would not have you out of the way for the world : who can tell what may happen ?

Miss. Oh, why did not I know that sooner ? I would have had on my new gauze cap ; but 'tis no matter, I will come home time enough to change it.

With these words she snatched up the little muff, and galloped down stairs, leaving her poor mother poring over the breaches she had undertaken to rectify.

Methinks I hear how heartily the gay and witty part of my readers will laugh at the character of Miss Loyter : they will certainly look upon her as a staking, staring, stupid, noteless creature ; a moving piece of mere matter uninformed by any soul or spirit, wholly incapable of deserving praise, and equally insensible of contempt : 'tis true she appears so ; — yet it may not be owing so much to any deficiency of nature in her, as to the mistaken fondness of a mother, who, fearing to give her a moment's discontent, neglected to rouse the native sluggishness of her faculties by any exercise or employment.

What therefore can be expected from a young person bred in a supine indolence, accustomed to have her will in every thing, and scarce taught the difference between good and evil, but that she should, all her life, act as chance, or as her own undistinguishing fancy shall direct ? — Bless all sober and thinking men from a wife of this cast !

CHAPTER VI.

The Author expects will make a full Atonement to the Ladies for the too much plain Dealing, as some of them may think, of the preceding Chapter.

WOMEN and wedlock are the common topics of ridicule among men, who, without one spark of genius or capacity, imagine themselves wits, and set up for such: but whatever either they, or some who even have a better way of thinking in other things, pretend to alledge against the sex, it is very evident, and must be confessed, that Nature has endowed the minds of many women with as great and valuable talents as ever she bestowed on men.

Numberless are the examples which might be brought from the records both of ancient and modern history, to prove the truth of this assertion; but I shall content myself with mentioning only a few, yet enough to make those unworthy maligners of a sex, to whom they know in their own hearts they are indebted for all the convenience and happiness of their lives, take shame to themselves, and blush for what they have said. Who is so ignorant as not to have heard of the fam'd Cornelia of Rome, — the mother of the Gracchi, and the wife of Brutus, — the learned Hypatia of Greece, — the Boadicea and the Cartismuda of ancient Britain? But 'tis needless to look back into such distant times; — the wife of the late Peter the Great of Muscovy, — the imperial heroine of Germany, — Seigniora Laura of Italy, — and the present queens of Sweden and the Two Sicilies, are no less public than shining proofs of the capacity of a female mind. And even here there are not wanting

some, I may say, many ladies, who in private, and almost obscure life, are possessed of qualifications that might add lustre to the highest stations. In fine, there is nothing more certain, than that if the women, generally speaking, are less knowing than the men, it is only because they are denied the same advantages of education, and the mistaken mother lavishes her whole cares in embellishing the pretty person of her daughter, and gives no attention to the cultivation of her understanding.

I am happy in the acquaintance of a lady whom I shall distinguish by the name of Amadea: she had been married very young to a gentleman whom she tenderly loved, and by whom she was no less beloved; but had the misfortune to lose him at the age of twenty-five, and was at the same time the mother of three daughters, the eldest scarce four years old. The land estate, which was very considerable, descended to the next male-heir of the family; and all the personals, with a jointure of four hundred per annum, to the fair widow; and each of her children five thousand pounds.

The first three years of her widowhood she lived the life of a recluse, seldom stirring out of her own house, except to her devotions, or when the necessity of her affairs obliged her; nor did she, with her mourning, throw this reserve entirely off: though it is now full thirteen years since her dear husband's death, she neither visits nor receives visits as formerly, but confines her conversation to those of her kindred, or very long and intimate acquaintance; never appears at any public diversion, and rejects even the first mention of proposals for a second marriage, though several very advantageous ones have been attempted.

All her care has been turned on the education of her children, and all her pleasures centered in observing

observing the improvements they made by the instructions given to them:—she had never suffered their infancy to be frightened with idle stories of spirits and hobgoblins, nor amused with fairy tales; from their most early years she awak'd reason in them, and contriv'd it so, that even the little sports she indulged them in, should some way or other be conducive to that great end.

As they grew bigger, she had masters to teach them music and dancing, the French and Italian languages, and as much of the Latin as was sufficient to make them speak and write English properly; but these politer studies were not to take up all their time; the oeconomy of domestic life she look'd upon as too necessary a qualification not to be well attended to; some hours in every day were set apart for needle-work; and whenever the table was to be furnished with any thing extraordinary, they were sure to be put under the tuition of the cook, and frequently assisted her in those parts of her business, which were the most delicate and least laborious.

Thus desirous of enriching their minds with every useful kind of knowledge, it cannot be supposed that books were out of the question; no, each of these young ladies takes upon her, in her turn, to read to the two others the whole time they are at work. But above all other things, this discreet mother was studiously watchful to prevent the pride and little vanities, so incident to human nature, from taking too fast hold of their young hearts: betimes she taught them, that nothing concerning themselves, except the embellishments of their minds, was worthy their attention: that all cares relating to dress or person, beyond what cleanliness and decency required, were superfluous and silly; and that every minute wasted at the toilet would rob them of some ad-

vantage they might otherwise receive. I am well aware, those of my fair readers who have been brought up in a different manner, which, by the way, I fear are much the greatest part, will be apt to cry out against the conduct of Amadea ; they will, perhaps, say, they wonder the poor girls are not mop'd, and that they must certainly be dull, stupid creatures : but those who think thus, need only have a sight of the young ladies to be convinced of their mistake : nothing can be more lively and spirited than all the three sisters ; smiles of innocence and joy dwell for ever on their faces, and denote an innate chearfulness and satisfaction, which all those hurrying pleasures, so eagerly pursued by others, have not the power of bestowing.

I made several Invisible Visits to them in their own apartment, and I know very few things capable of giving me a more sincere delight than I took in observing their behaviour, at times when they thought themselves entirely free from all inspection, and had no occasion to put restraint upon their words or actions. Never did I find them lolling out of window, or consulting their look or motions in the great glass ; never heard them complaining they were not permitted to be first in every new fashion ; never wishing to be in the Mall, or any other public place ; never wantonly giggling about love or lovers : never quarrelling with each other, or ridiculing the foibles of their acquaintance. Sometimes I caught them playing and singing to their instruments ; at others, amusing themselves with practising some new dance, and not seldom busily employed in needle-work for the use of the family ; and at the same time making such remarks as occurred to them on some passage or other in history : in a word, I could perceive nothing but what put me in mind of the
three

three Graces, who, according to one of our poets, are actuated by but one soul, and that, all harmony and sweet contentment.

The truth is, Amadea never makes use of any austerities : the precepts she gives them are only enforced by her own example, and delivered in such a manner as to steal themselves upon the mind, and have no need of any compunction from authority ; so that one may truly say,

Wisdom appears in her so bright and gay,
They hear with pleasure, and with pride obey.

Happy the children who have such a mother !
Happy the mother who has children such as these !
I am persuaded many examples of this kind might be found, if parents would be at the pains to pursue the same measures Amadea did, and instil into their offspring the principles of virtue and wisdom before they knew what was meant by vice and folly.



CHAP. VII.

Contains the Recital of an Adventure, which, perhaps, will not be found less interesting for its being not altogether of so singular a Nature as some others in this Work may have appeared.

I Was one morning taking my Invisible progression into those pleasant fields which lie behind Montague-House, not with the least view of making any discoveries, for I could expect none in that retired place, but merely to enjoy the benefit of the fresh air. I had not walked many minutes, however, before I heard the tread of some persons close behind me ; I stepped aside to let them pass, and saw that one of them was Narcissa, the only daughter of a gentleman who lived in that neighbourhood.

bourhood : the person who accompanied her was her maid, as I soon after found by the following dialogue between them.

Narcissa. Indeed, Betty, I think Capt. Pike shews but little love to let us be here before him.

Betty. Oh, madam, you should consider that gentlemen in his post are not always masters of their time : you know he said he came to town on affairs of the regiment, and something, perhaps, may have happened ; but whatever it is that detains him, it cannot be for want of affection ; I am so certain of that, I would pawn my life upon it.

Narcissa. You are very confident, Betty, to offer such security for a man you have never seen but twice in your life.

Betty. If I had never seen him but once, madam, I have seen enough to make me know that he loves you to distraction : poor gentleman, if he should not succeed in his addresses, I am sure he has reason to curse me.

Narcissa. Curse thee, Betty !—why curse thee ?

Betty. He might never have seen you if it had not been for me. Don't you remember, madam, how I teaz'd you to go into a shop and buy the last new play ? he was sitting reading when we came in, and I shall never forget how he threw down the pamphlet he had in his hand and stared at you, and how he sigh'd ; poor soul, he lost his heart from that very moment ; — then how he followed us into the Park ; and how he trembled when he ask'd your leave to join us !

Narcissa. Pish, that might be affectation.

Betty. No, madam, no such matter ; the tongue may deceive one, but the eyes cannot. And then, when you were so good to give him a meeting afterwards in the walk by Rosamond's pond, how tenderly he expressed himself ! for my part, my heart melted at every word he said.

Narcissa.

Narcissa. He can talk moving enough, that's certain; but yet, Betty, I ought not to be too hasty in giving credit to a man I know so little of, or what designs he may have upon me.

Betty. Nay, madam, I think you know as much of him as you can do without being married to him. Did not he tell you his name was Pike, and that he was a Captain of Colonel *****'s regiment? As to his designs, you cannot doubt of their being honourable, as he begged you would permit him to visit you, and ask your father's leave to make his addresses.

Narcissa. Ah, Betty, I wish such a thing could be, for he is a prodigious pretty man; but it is impossible, you know my father hates a soldier, calls them a pack of locusts; besides, he has always designed me for Mr. Oakly.

Betty. Ay, madam, and will make you have Mr. Oakly too, or lead apes in Hell, if you don't take care to prevent it.

Narcissa. Heigh-ho!

Betty. Never sigh, madam, but resolve.

Narcissa. On what?

Betty. To run away from a forced marriage; to exert the spirit of a true-born Englishwoman, and be your own provider.

Narcissa. How thou talkest!

Betty. I talk nothing but reason, madam; but here comes one who I fancy will be able to urge it more effectually.

The person whom she had been so strenuously pleading for now appeared; he was a tall well-made man, and had a good soldierly aspect; but yet I thought I discovered something about him that shewed he had not always been accustomed to wear the rich cloaths he now had on; there wanted that easy freedom in his air, which denotes the true-bred gentleman; and I presently set him down
in

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in my mind, either for an impostor, or one whom some lucky chance had elevated far above his birth. He approached Narcissa with a low bow, and after taking hold of one of her hands and kissing it with the greatest fervency, addressed her in these terms :

Capt. How miserable have I been, my angel, in being kept thus long from your divine presence !

Narcissa. I do not doubt, sir, but you have been better engaged.

Capt. Cruel supposition ! How can you so far wrong me, as to imagine that the whole world has any thing in it I should put in competition with the blessing I now enjoy ? But the major of our regiment is in town, and unluckily sent for me this morning ; we subalterns must obey our commanding officer ; but I hope in a few months to be a colonel, and I shall then have leisure to lie eternally at your feet.

Betty. Ah, sir, I am afraid before that time my lady will be obliged to have somebody else lie at her feet.

Narcissa. Hold your prating, hussy. Who gave you the privilege of speaking ?

Betty. Madam, the respect I have for you will not suffer me to be silent. I tell you nothing but the truth, sir ; my lady will be forced to marry a man to whom she has the greatest aversion.

Capt. O Heaven ! so near being torn from all my hopes ! And can you, madam, can a lady of your delicacy submit —

Narcissa. Sir, this foolish wench talks she knows not what : — I may live single if I please.

Capt. Live single ! Heaven forbid. No, Nature endowed you not with such superior charms but to bless some man, who, by his abundant love, might make him worthy of them. Oh that I were the happy he !

Narcissa.

Narcissa. Think not of it, Captain ; my father would never give his consent to any one but the person he has made choice of for me, much less would he endure to see me wedded to a gentleman of the army.

Capt. And have you too that implacable aversion to a fash and crocket ?

Narcissa. I will not pretend to say I have ; I think the army our only security in time of war, and the greatest ornament to our country in time of peace.

Capt. Oh then, if I could flatter myself there was nothing in my person more disagreeable to you than in my function, I should have nothing left to fear.

Narcissa. Yes, indeed, you would, sir, a great deal ; for I assure you, if I married you, my father would not give me a groat.

Capt. Let him keep his dirty trash, I despise money ; the commission I enjoy at present will keep us above contempt, and I have money in the bank ready to purchase the first vacant command of a regiment.

Narcissa. Can you imagine I would give myself to a man who has but just begun to tell me that he loved me ?

Capt. My whole life shall be but one continued scene of courtship ; be assured I shall not be the less, but infinitely the more your adorer by being your husband ; oh then be just to my ardent passion, generously put an end to my despair.

Narcissa. Bless me, what would the world say of such a thing ?

Capt. The wise, madam, despise all forms. Do not kings and princes marry those they never saw before ? Besides, the late proceedings of the legislature lay you under a necessity of coming to a speedy resolution.

Betty.

Betty. Ay, madam, remember the act.

Capt. Ay, madam, consider how soon that fatal Monday will arrive, which takes from you the power of snatching from misery the man who loves you more than life, and would sacrifice every thing for you.

Narcissa. I must confess, Captain, your offering to take me without a fortune demands some gratitude on my part; and if— but no more, — I see a lady yonder whom I would not wish should surprise us in this conversation; this evening you shall know my final resolution. Where can I send to you?

Capt. I have an appointment with some young officers this afternoon at Will's Coffee-house, Whitehall, and shall there wait my doom with the most ardent impatience; but before you pass the sentence of my fate, think, oh think, my life or death depends upon it.

Narcissa. Well, well, be easy, but go.

Capt. I must obey; may love and all its powers plead for me!

He said no more, but turned away as his mistress had commanded, and passed on to another part of the field, while she advanced to meet the lady she had mentioned; but Betty, who was heartily vex'd at this accident, could not forbear crying out as they went along, 'I wonder what could bring Marilla here?'

The words were either not heard, or not regarded by Narcissa, who, I could perceive by her looks, was little less disconcerted; she met her friend, however, with a shew of gaiety and satisfaction, and as soon as they came near each other, saluted her in these terms:

Narcissa. My dear Marilla! 'tis a wonder to see you in such a place as this; you used to be an enemy to all solitary walks.

Marilla.

Marilla. So I am still ; but I have been at your house, and was told you were here, so came in mere good-nature to hinder you from indulging melancholy ; but I find I might have spared myself that trouble. Pray who was that pretty fellow that left you just now ?

Narcissa. I know not ; he only came up to us, seeing nobody else in the place, I suppose, to ask which was the nearest way to Great Russell-street.

Marilla. Rather to ask the way to a lady's heart, who lives not far from Great Russell-street. Oh, Narcissa, you cannot deceive me : I could easily perceive at the distance I was, that he did not part from you with the air of a man who had no other business than to ask such an impertinent question : besides, I must tell you, that you are a very ill dissembler ; your blushes declare that he is a lover ; I know well enough that you met him here by appointment.—Prithoe let me into the whole of the secret.

Narcissa still persisted in her first assertions, but the other seemed not to give credit on that score, and, assuming a more serious air, spoke thus :

Marilla. I perceive, my dear Narcissa, I am not thought worthy of your confidence, tho' I am very certain you have not a friend in the world who wishes your happiness with more sincerity than I do.

Narcissa. I believe it, my dear, and am much obliged to you ; but you would not have me tell lies to shew my gratitude.

Marilla. Well, well, I shall urge you no farther, and should not have been so impertinent to take any notice of what I saw, but for the transport it gave me to imagine you might now have an opportunity of delivering yourself from the danger of being forced into a marriage with a man whom I have heard you declare so great an aversion for.

Narcissa.

Narcissa. And suppose the thing were really as you have taken it into your head to fancy, would you have me disoblige my father by marrying without his consent?

Marilla. Yes, when he will give his consent to nobody but one with whom you must be miserable: for besides the dislike you have to the person of Oakly, his temper is such as would break a woman's heart in two months. You know I am very intimate with his sister, and cannot avoid seeing oddities in his behaviour which have made me tremble for you a thousand times.

Narcissa. I cannot think my father will ever go about to compel my inclinations.

Marilla. Oakly is of another opinion; for I can tell you he makes no scruple to say, that if you do not marry him, you will marry nobody; therefore, without diving into the secrets of your heart, let me advise you, my dear creature, not to lose the short time allowed you, but if you have any offer less disagreeable to you than Oakly, accept it at once; three days hence it will be out of your power.

Narcissa. But, my dear, what man that is worth having will have a woman without fortune?

Marilla. If I were a man, I should tell you that your person was a sufficient fortune, and I do not doubt but there are a great many who would think so; but you have two thousand pounds left you by your grandmother, independent of your father, and I dare say if you were once married, and the thing past recal, he would forgive it; consider you are his only daughter, and both your brothers are provided for, the one by an estate, and the other by a good preferment in the church.

What answer *Narcissa* would have made I know not; it began to rain very fast, so that the ladies were obliged to mend their pace, and make all the
haste

haste they could out of the field ; Marilla took the first chair she met with, saying it would be dinner-time before she should be able to get dress'd ; Narcissa and her maid ran home through the shower, and I followed, not only to take shelter, but also to hear the result of the young lady's determination on what had passed between her and Capt. Pike. As soon as they had plucked off their wet hats and capuchins, and Narcissa had a little resettled herself, she said to her maid,

Narcissa. Well, Betty, this has been an odd morning.

Betty. I hope it will prove a lucky one, madam ; but I am glad you did not tell Marilla any thing of the matter.

Narcissa. She was so pleasing that I had half a mind ; but when I considered how great she was with Oakly's sister, I thought it was better to keep her in ignorance.

Betty. Much better, indeed, madam. But pray what do you resolve to do about the Captain ?

Narcissa. Why I must e'en have him, I think.

Betty. You made him a kind of promise to send to him.

Betty. I did so, and will keep it ; I will write to him this moment, before any company comes to prevent me.

Betty. You are in the right, madam ; there is nothing like the time present.

To Capt. P I K E.

* S I R,

* I should be guilty of an injustice both to myself
 * and you, not to be sensible of the proof you offer
 * of your sincerity ; I find in it, indeed, all that
 * can be imagined, and much more than could be
 * expected of love, honour, and generosity ; and
 * hope

‘ hope I shall hereafter stand excused to my father and the world, for taking a step excited by gratitude, and approved of by my reason; meet me therefore to-morrow morning at eight precisely, in the Piazza next King-street, Covent Garden, where I will put myself under your protection, and be conducted by you to whatever place you shall judge most proper for the ceremony which shall make me eternally yours.

‘ NARCISSA.’

Having sealed this billet, she gave it to her maid, with a strict charge to send it by a trusty messenger; on which the girl replied, ‘ Yes, madam, you may depend on the safe conveyance; for I will be the bearer of it myself.’

What farther chat passed between the mistress and maid, was too insignificant to be repeated, nor, indeed, did I stay to hear much of it, having already gained all that was necessary for the present, to shut my Tablets, and retired on the first opportunity I found for my leaving the house.

As it was plain to me, however, that Betty was deeply interested in the concession Narcissa had made to the captain, and I had also some suspicion that he was not in reality the person he pretended to be, I resolved to go in the evening to the coffee-house, and be witness of his behaviour on receiving the letter Betty was to bring. Accordingly I went and found him there, not, as he said, in company with young officers, but sitting alone in a corner of the room with his hat very much flapped. — A few minutes after I came in, a waiter called aloud to know if one Capt. Pike was there; on which he started up, and answering to the name, was told, a gentlewoman at the door desired to speak with him; he went hastily out, and I pursued his steps, not doubting but it

was the emissary of Narcissa; as soon as he saw it was she, he cried out in some surprise,

Capt. What, sister, are you come yourself? You bring me no bad news, I hope.

Betty. No, no, the best you can expect; but walk this way, 'tis not proper to stand here to talk. — For Heaven's sake! why did you venture to appoint such a public place as this?

Capt. Nobody knows me here; my Captain never uses this house. But tell me, how goes our affair?

Betty. Rarely; she will have you, here is her promise under her own hand. — By this time they were got about the middle of Scotland-yard, where Betty having given him the letter of Narcissa, he stopped to read it by the light of a lamp at a gentleman's door, and as soon as he had finished cried out,

Capt. This is brave, indeed, and nothing sure was ever so lucky as our fixing to-morrow for our wedding; for the captain went to Hampstead this morning with a whore he pick'd up in the Park the other night, and will not be in town these two days; so I shall have all that time to myself, and can get at what cloaths and linen I want. But, my dear sister, what shall I do with this girl when I have married her? where must I carry her?

Betty. That is what I come to talk about. You must take a fine lodging for her, and order a handsome dinner to be provided at some tavern or other; every thing must be done with a grand air, that she may suspect nothing till after you have consummated. Hah, brother!

Capt. But, Betty, I have no money; all will go wrong still, if you cannot help me out.

Betty. Nothing would go right, if it were not for me; you may thank God for having such a sister, you might have been a foot-soldier else as long

long as you lived ; but there is no time to be lost : I have brought you four pieces, and I believe that will be sufficient for every thing ; go and buy a ring, and secure a lodging immediately.

Capt. You may be sure I shall not fail. But harkye, Betty, take care she brings the writings of her two thousand pounds, and all her jewels.

Betty. Ay, ay ; — she shall leave nothing of value behind her, I'll engage.

With these words they separated, and I went home, heartily glad that I had made this discovery, and determined to save Narcissa, if possible, from the misfortune she was so near falling into ; to which end I sat down to my escrutore, and immediately wrote to her father in the following terms :

To JOHN ***** , Esq.

‘ S I R,

‘ The shock I am now about to give you can only be excused by its being done to prevent you from receiving a much greater and more lasting one. Sorry am I to tell you, yet so it is, your daughter Narcissa is on the point of utter destruction : she has promised, and is resolved to keep her word, to join herself in marriage with a wretch, who, tho’ of the most abject rank, in order to seduce her innocence, assumes the character of a gentleman, and calls himself Captain Pike ; Betty, her waiting-maid, is sister to the impostor, and has been the conductress of the whole villainous design ; every thing is prepared for the accomplishment, and to-morrow is the day fixed ; but I hope this intelligence will reach you time enough to prevent so irremediable an evil. I am, Sir, your unknown well-wisher and humble servant.’

Having

Having sent this away, and fully discharged what my honour and conscience represented as a duty, I flattered myself with the expectation of seeing the next day treachery and deceit receive the mortification they justly merited.



CHAP. VIII.

Contains a brief Account of the Effects produced by the good Intentions of the Invisible Spy, with some other subsequent Particulars.

TH O' I had not the least room to doubt but that the information I had given the father of Narcissa would have all the success I wish'd, yet I could not avoid being extremely curious to see in what manner the persons concern'd would behave on this occasion; accordingly I went to the house the next morning about eleven, expecting to find that the maid had been turned out of doors, the mistress in tears for her disappointment, and the old gentleman rejoicing in the thoughts of having saved his beloved daughter from undoing herself. A servant happening to be at the door receiving some shoes from a fellow who had been just cleaning them, I gained an easy access. Finding nobody in the lower floor I went up stairs, but the same solitude reigned likewise there: I then proceeded a story higher, and there saw only a servant-maid sweeping out a room, which, by a toylet being set out, I judged was the chamber of Narcissa: I was very much surpris'd to find every thing so quiet in a place where I look'd for nothing but confusion, and stopp'd on the stairs to consider what might be the occasion; when on a sudden I heard the ringing of a small bell, and presently after saw a footman running hastily up; I followed him where he went,
which

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which was into the chamber of Narcissa's father, who was not yet up, but now called for his cloaths. As he was putting them on, he cast his eyes on the table, and seeing a letter lie there, asked his man when, and from whom it came: to which he replied, ' Sir, it was left for you last night by a porter; but as you came home so late, I would not disturb you with it.'

I was astonished on finding that this was no other than the letter I had sent to him; but more troubled, that by the delivery of it being delayed, poor Narcissa had fallen into the trap laid for her: but if I, a stranger, could be so much affected, what agony must rend the tender father's heart? Scarce had he gone through the half of what I had wrote, before he cried out, casting at the same time a look full of despair and rage upon his servant,

Father. Ill-fated wretch! what mischief, what ruin has thy neglect brought upon me and my family! You imagined I was drunk last night, I suppose; but had I been so, here is enough in this letter to have brought me to my senses: but go, run up to my daughter's chamber, see if she be there.

Footman. Sir, she went very early this morning with Mrs. Betty, and is not yet come back.

Father. Nor ever will, I fear: the intelligence this brings is too true, I find. Run to Mr Oakly and my cousin Johnson's, bid them both come this instant! Fly! and, do you hear, bring a coach with you; if I can recover her before consummation, her ruin may yet be prevented.

The fellow went on his errand, and the old gentleman in the mean time stamping, biting his lips, and shewing all the marks of an inward distraction, made an end of putting on his cloaths, in order to go in search of his lost daughter, when the gentlemen he had sent for should arrive; but I staid

staid not to hear what method would be pursued for that purpose, as thinking it of no moment, and that it would be better to return again in the evening, when I might probably hear what success had attended their endeavours. The time I chose for going, was as late at night as I thought I might get an opportunity of entering; yet the disconsolate father was but just come home: his two friends were with him; they said all they could to alleviate his sorrows, but it availed no more than preaching to the winds. They had found out, it seems, where the marriage was performed; after which they went to all taverns, coffee-houses, and other public places which they heard were frequented by officers, to enquire concerning one who called himself Capt. Pike, but could not receive the least information of any one who bore that name; and all the consolation the old gentleman had for the pains he had taken, was the cruel certainty that his dear daughter was inevitably undone.

Though I saw very little probability of my being able to learn any thing more at this house than I had already done, yet I could not forbear calling there constantly every day; and at last, by this dint of continued application, I became acquainted with the whole melancholy secret of Narcissa's fate, almost as soon as the family knew it themselves. The pretended Captain had managed every thing according to the direction of his sister. As soon as the ceremony was over, he had conducted his bride to very handsome lodgings, where an entertainment suitable to the occasion was provided; and the poor deluded young lady, seeing nothing but what served to make her satisfied with what she had done, in return for his imaginary generosity, made him a present of her two thousand pounds, which was in India Bonds.

Her contentment might, perhaps, have lasted some little time longer than it did, if she had not propos'd waiting on her father, to implore his forgiveness and blessing ; on which the impostor, having now got his ends, thinking it needless to continue the deception any longer, confessed that he was no more than a private man in the army ; but told her that he was now treating with his Captain for his discharge, and would purchase a commission with some part of the money she had given him ; and added, that 'till these two points were accomplish'd, it would be altogether improper to appear before her father.

Narcissa fell into the utmost distraction on this eclairsissement, vowed not to live with a wretch who had put so base a trick upon her, but would go home to her father, who she doubted not would find means to punish such a flagrant piece of villainy. He only laughed at her reproaches, and said, that as she was his wife, she had it not in her choice to leave him. Betty also now threw off the character of a servant, and assuming the authority of a sister, pretended to rebuke her idling, as she insolently termed it.

She found an opportunity, however, of making her escape, and fled for refuge to the house of a near relation, who, on hearing her story, undertook to intercede with her father ; which he did so successfully, that the old gentleman forgave and took her again into favour. All possible measures were taken to set aside the marriage, and compel the impostor to refund the money Narcissa had so unwarily bestowed upon him ; but as he knew the law was too much on his side, having not married her in a false name, though under a false character, he carried things with a very high hand, would part with nothing, not even the jewels she had left behind, but even threaten'd to commence a process

process against any one who detained her person. In fine, all that could be done was to get him to sign articles of separation ; after which Narcissa retired into the country, where I hear she resolves to waste the whole remainder of her days in a melancholy contrition for the rashness of her ungoverned conduct.

I must not forget to let my readers know that Marilla is since married to Mr. Oakly, with whom, as I am credibly informed, she was long passionately in love, and on that motive used the utmost of her endeavours to strengthen the aversion her fair friend had for him.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

H 2

T H E



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.
BOOK VII.



CHAPTER I.

The Author flatters himself will be no unacceptable Present to all those of the Fair Sex, who are either truly innocent, or would preserve the Reputation of being so.

WHEN a young woman, of what rank or degree soever, indulges herself in a too great freedom of conversation with one of a loose and wanton behaviour, she cannot wonder that those who are witnesses of their intimacy should suspect her guilty of the same inclinations; and that though perfectly innocent of the faults of her companion, she is made an equal partaker of her shame. Women, who are either born, or reduced by accidents, to low and indigent circumstances, excuse themselves by saying, that the necessity of their affairs compels them to keep an acquaintance with persons whom they find it their interest to oblige. But if this be an insufficient pretence, as certainly it is, since there is no interest which ought to

to be put in competition with reputation; what can be alledged in behalf of ladies of fortune and quality, who have it in their power to chuse their company, and it cannot be supposed would converse with any whose manners they did not approve?

In fine, there is no one error in conduct, which, according to my opinion, the sex in general should be more upon their guard against than this; for tho' some, dazzled with the pomp of show and equipage, may be weak enough to imagine, that to appear in public, or to be known to have an intimacy with a woman of a polluted fame, provided she be a person of condition, will bring no blemish on their own characters, or be of any prejudice to their morals, yet that such an intimacy is extremely dangerous to both, may be very easily demonstrated.

As to character, — If the world should be more silent than it ever was, or ever will be on such occasions, it cannot be expected that a woman, who has thrown off all regard for her own honour, should have any for that of the person she converses with, or would even wish they should be thought possess'd of a virtue she is entirely destitute of herself:—no, on the contrary, she will rather have recourse to all the wicked artifices she may be mistress of, to cast a shade over that brightness which would render her own deformity more conspicuous. But this is not the worst danger to which an innocent person is exposed by keeping company with a bad woman; we are told, from an unquestionable authority, that it is hard to touch pitch without being defil'd; and certainly there is nothing more evident, than that vice naturally loses great part of its horrors by becoming familiar to the sight. The chaste heart, which shudders at the bare repetition of indecent actions, by accustoming itself to be witness of them, ceases first to wonder, and by degrees to detest them; and tho' I will not be so uncharitable as to say, that the mind

is always corrupted by such a communication, yet I will venture to affirm, that the manners will be so.

I know very well, that the timid modesty I would recommend, as the surest guardian of a virgin's honour, has for many years been exploded; and that since some foreign customs have unhappily been introduced among us, to be capable of blushing is look'd upon, by those who pass for models of politeness, as an indication of the want both of wit and good breeding. This audacity of behaviour being so much the mode, it is not a little difficult to distinguish between those who really pursue the dictates of a licentious inclination, and those who put on a shew of it merely to comply with the example of others; and a person who judges of a woman by what he sees of her in public, runs a very great risque of being mistaken. Often has my opinion been led astray in this point, even in regard of ladies with whom I was most intimately acquainted, and saw every day; nor did I ever dare to give a character of any of them till my Belt of Invisibility afforded me an opportunity of prying into the secrets of the alcove.

Corisca and Emilia are two celebrated beauties; they are almost equally follow'd and admir'd by the men, but neither of them were ever jealous or envious of the praises given to the other; and there was once so excessive a fondness between them, that they were scarce ever seen asunder. Corisca has been married some years; Emilia has not yet been prevailed upon to part with her liberty: but tho' there is this difference in their circumstances, there has been too much appearance, upon exact similitude, in their humours and constitutions; I say in appearance, for I have since discover'd that light and darkness are not, in fact, more widely distant.

Corisca, long before she became a wife, was look'd upon as what they called a female rake; some there were, however, who imputed what she did only to the

the too great vivacity of her humour, and would not believe her guilty of any real crime ; but far the greater number were of a quite different opinion ; and indeed the little regard she takes of her family since her marriage, the public contempt with which she treats her husband, and the frequent quarrels she has with him in private, but too much justify the worst character that can be given either of her economy or her chastity. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is a certain something in her air, her wit, and manner of behaviour, so engaging to both sexes, that she has always been, and still continues to be, constantly visited by persons not only of the best fortunes, but of the best reputations, who chuse rather to seem blind to her faults, than deny themselves the pleasure of her conversation. It is, beyond all dispute, a very great pity, that a woman, so plenteously endowed by Nature with every qualification to shew Virtue in its most amiable colours, should, thro' a strange depravity of principles and inclination, make use of all the fine talents she is mistress of, only to varnish over the foul face of Vice, and give a pleasing aspect to the deformity of Sin and Shame.

The beautiful person of Emilia, her sprightly wit, her good humour and affability, render'd her the darling of all who knew her : they beheld with an infinity of concern her intimacy with Corisca ; and those who, either by proximity of blood, or a long acquaintance with her, thought themselves privileged to offer their advice, did it in the strongest terms, and spared no remonstrances that might prevail on her to break off so dangerous a communication ; but she was deaf to all that could be said to her on this subject : it was her misfortune to become the mistress of her own actions at too early an age ; what fortune she was possessed of was in her own hands ; and as she was intirely independent on her friends, would not submit to be directed by them.

In justice to this young lady's character, however, I must say, and shall hereafter prove, that there is a fund of humour and virtue in her soul sufficient to have made her look with contempt and detestation on the conduct of Corisca, and to have oblig'd her, if not to break off all conversation with her, at least not to appear with her in public, or to make one in any party of pleasure where she was engaged. But, alas! the seeds of those noble principles for a time lay dormant in her; choked up with the natural levities of youth, and the modish excesses of the age, they had not power to shoot forth into action: innocently wanton, and indolently gay, she saw not the danger to which she exposed her person and reputation, because she thought not of it, nor gave herself the pains to examine what snares might possibly be spread for her; but suffering herself to be continually hurried from one amusement to another, never considered or reflected on any thing farther than the present satisfaction.

I have been thus particular in describing the character and humour of Emilia, because in the course of my rambles I have found too many others of the same giddy bent, who, without the least propensity to ill, have heedlessly run into actions which have involved their whole future lives in dishonour: these have reason to pardon this digression, especially as it has not been tedious; and I shall now return to the adventure which occasioned it.

Among the many Invisible Visits, which for a considerable time together I had made to the apartment of this celebrated Corisca, I happened to be there one morning when Favonius and Palamede were with her: the first of these gentlemen is of a very amorous inclination, and known to be what the world calls well with her: the other, though gay and lively as Mercury himself, has been restrain'd either through want of inclination to her person, or

his

His friendship to Favonius, from attempting to take any private liberties, and seldom visits her but in his company. The discourse they were engaged in, when I first broke in upon them; I found was on a subject of too trifling a nature for me to spread my Tablets for the reception of; so I shall make no repetition of any things which were said 'till the entrance of Emilia, who came in soon after. The first salutations were no sooner over, than Corisca, taking her fondly by the hand, spoke thus ::

Corisca. Dear creature, this is an excess of goodness in you to come thus early; I did not expect you 'till dinner-time.

Emilia. Indeed, my dear, I never waited on you with so ill a will, nor came on an errand so disagreeable to my inclination; for I have but just time to tell you; that I am deprived of the pleasure I proposed of passing the whole day with you.

Corisca. On what occasion?

Emilia. The most unlucky one that could have happen'd: an old aunt of mine has taken it into her head to quit her rookery and hen-house in the country, and come to state and be stared at in town: she arriv'd last night, and sent me word she must needs see me this morning; decency obliges me to go; she is my godmother, and besides, she is rich.

Corisca. But cannot you make some excuse to leave her as soon as you have paid your compliments? I shall have all the world here this afternoon, and would not have you absent upon any score.

Emilia. It cannot be avoided; she pretends to have a huge fondness for me, and I know will detain me, with a thousand impertinent declarations of it, 'till bed-time; so, my dear, adieu for this whole tedious day; to-morrow, I hope, will atone for this vexation. Gentlemen, your servant.

In speaking these last words she turn'd upon her heel, and ran out of the room: but not so hastily; but

that Palamede, with one stride, joined her at the door, and led her down stairs; and in the mean time Corisca, looking on Favonius, said to him:

Corisca. I pity poor Emilia; the impertinent fondness of an old relation is almost as great a mortification as the saucy indifference of a young fellow one likes.

Favonius. The beautiful Corisca, I am sure, can never be in danger of experiencing the latter of these vexations.

To prove the sincerity of this assertion he closed it with a strenuous embrace, which Corisca return'd; there was time for no more; Palamede came back, and Favonius, with a smile, spoke in this manner:

Favonius. By the sparkle in your eyes, Palamede, I should imagine the piece of gallantry you have shewed to Emilia has been more than ordinarily well received.

Palamede. This and all others I have yet had in my power to treat that lady with, have been too trifling to deserve much notice from her.

Favonius. Oh, every kind glance gives transport to a man in love; you must know, madam, I have found out that Palamede is desperately in love with Emilia.

Corisca. Indeed! and do you allow the charge, Palamede?

Palamede. Not altogether, madam; I am not absolutely in love, but confess I think Emilia an extreme fine girl, and have had some very odd dreams on her account.

Corisca. What hinders you then from making your addresses to her?

Palamede. Why, 'faith, madam, to confess the truth, I was afraid of not succeeding on the terms I wish'd to do; and as for marriage, the circumstances of my estate require I should make choice of a wife with a much larger fortune than Emilia is possess'd of.

Favonius.

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Favonius. You are perfectly in the right, Palamede; a good fortune with a wife is absolutely necessary for a man of pleasure, as it enables him to make handsome presents and entertainments to those women he may happen to like better.

Corisca. So, Palamede, you durst not ask Emilia the question; for fear of meeting a rebuff from her over-scrupulous virtue.

Palamede. That is indeed the case, madam.

Corisca. Then you are a fool: not but I believe Emilia is perfectly innocent as yet; but what is innocence, what is virtue, what is honour, when oppos'd to love and inclination? Do you not know what Mrs. Behn, who must be allowed to be a perfect judge of nature in our sex, says upon this occasion?

Oh cursed Honour, thou who first did'st damn

A woman to the sin of Shame!

Honour! who taught to lovely eyes the art

To wound, and not to cure the heart;

With love t'invite, but to forbid with awe;

And to themselves prescribe a cruel law.

His chief attributes are pride and spite,

His pow'r is robbing lovers of delight.

Honour! that puts our words, that should be free,

Into a set formality!

Thou base debaucher of the generous heart,

That teachest all our looks and actions art,

What Love design'd a sacred gift,

What Nature made to be possess'd,

Mistaken Honour made a theft.

Thou foe to Pleasure, Nature's worst disease!

Thou tyrant over mighty kings,

Be gone to princes' palaces,

But let the humble swain go on

In the blest paths of the first race of man,

That nearest were to Gods allied,

And, form'd for love, disdain'd all other pride.

The emphatic accents and graceful manner with which Corisca pronounced these lines, adding to the beauty of the poetry, struck so much upon the hearts of the two gentlemen, that they could not forbear clapping their hands, and crying out several times, 'Encore, Encore, charming Corisca !' On which she laugh'd heartily, and reply'd,

Corisca. I want none of these theatrical testimonies of approbation ; I would only convince Palamede, from an unquestionable authority of our English Sappho, that when a woman loves, no considerations are of force to restrain her from acting up to the dictates of her passion.

Palamede. Ay, madam, if I could flatter myself with the hopes of being loved by Emilia, I should have nothing to apprehend.

Corisca. I will not pretend to tell you that she is so much in love as not to be able to eat, drink, or sleep for the thoughts of you ; but I have heard her say a thousand times over, I believe, that you are, without exception, the prettiest fellow in the whole town ; that you dress the best, and have something peculiarly agreeable in your air and manner of behaviour ; and on the strength of this, and some other indications I have observed about her, I dare venture to affirm, that you are far from being indifferent to her, and that she would be no less pleased than yourself with an opportunity of being entertained by you in private.

Palamede. Dear madam, you make me the most transported man alive. But by what means can such a thing be brought about ? some scheme must be laid for that purpose.

Corisca. Nothing more easy ; I have it all in my head already ; she will go any where with me ; we shall be together to-morrow ; you too shall come in as if by accident, and propose going to take the air on the other side of the water ; there is a house the most

most commodiously situated that can be; — good gardens, good wine, good every thing.—Favonius is well acquainted with the place.

Favonius. I suppose you mean that kept by Mrs. *****.

Corisca. The same. When we have been there some time, and it begins to draw near the hour proper to think of going home, you shall discharge the coach, and pretend the fellow got drunk and went away without your knowledge; there will be no possibility of procuring a vehicle to bring us to town, especially at night; Favonius must be content to do penance with me in loitering about the gardens, or in something or other, till morning, while you make the most of your time with Emilia.

Palamede. Excellent, my charming Machiavel! But how shall we prevail on Emilia to be separated from her dear Corisca?

Corisca. Leave that to my management; she shall suspect nothing of the matter till she finds herself alone with you, and then it will be your business to make her satisfied with being so.

Palamede. Kind creature! where shall I find words to thank this compassion to a suffering lover?

Corisca. Never trouble yourself about thanks; good actions, they say, reward themselves.

Favonius. As for my part, I shall defer those acknowledgements which your excess of goodness demands from me, both on my own score and that of my friend, till to-morrow-night, when they shall make part of that agreeable penance I am to perform.

This speech of Favonius paved the way for a conversation conformable enough to the characters of the persons engaged in it; but I am certain would not be well relish'd by that part of my readers which I am most ambitious of obliging; I shall therefore close the scene, as indeed I did soon after my Tablets, and quitted the apartments of this fair libertine.

libertine, in order to retire to my own, and contemplate at leisure on what I had seen and heard.



CHAP. II.

Presents the Reader with the Catastrophe of an Adventure very different from what the Beginning may have given him Reason to expect.

THOU' I had thought myself too well acquainted with the principles and inclinations of Corisca, to be at all surpris'd at any act of licentiousness she could possibly be guilty of, yet I could not defend my senses from being seized with the extreme shock, on finding she could be base enough to condescend to become the instrument of others' pleasures, and betray the innocence of a young lady for whom she had as much friendship as is consistent with a woman of her character;—forgetting all this while what the good old poet, Mr. Philip Massinger, tells us on an occasion similar to this of Corisca and Emilia.

Virtue and Vice in one sole point agree:—

Each would be glad all like themselves might be.

In ruminating very wisely, as I then imagin'd, on what Corisca had said to Palamede, I must confess I entertain'd suspicions not at all to the advantage of poor Emilia; I fancied that she had in reality confess'd a passion for that gentleman, and Corisca, in forming this contrivance to bring about a private interview between them, had done nothing but what she was convinced in her own mind would be highly satisfactory to her fair friend. It was never my custom, however, to place an entire dependance on conjecture, whether my own or that of another person; so resolved to be as convinced as my Invisible Inspection could make me. Accordingly the
next

next day in the afternoon I girded on my precious Belt, and went to the house of Corisca. Emilia was not yet come; but just as I arrived I heard her give orders to refuse admittance to all of her own sex except that lady, and also to all those of the other except Eavonius and Palamede.

As I doubted not but I should be able to fathom the whole truth of this affair, by the conversation that would pass between these two ladies while they believed themselves alone together, I was extremely impatient for the approach of Emilia, and equally rejoiced when I saw her enter. The first salutations they gave each other were such as might be expected from persons who mutually profess'd so warm and tender a friendship; the subjects they afterwards talked upon were not of any consequence; not one word of Palamede nor the projected tour was mentioned; on which I absolved Emilia from all blame on this account, and was sorry I had ever wronged her. But the less room I had to condemn, the greater cause I had to pity her, and to detest the cruel plot contrived, and so near being put in execution against her virtue; but I had no time to indulge meditation; the gentleman presently came in; the proposal, as agreed upon between them and Corisca, was immediately made; the ladies gave a ready assent; a hackney-coach was ordered to be called, and every one seemed equally on the wing to be gone.

The reader will now perhaps imagine, that it being easy to see into the end of this affair, there was no occasion for any farther enquiries in relation to it, and that curiosity had received its utmost gratification; but I happened to be of a different way of thinking; I sincerely pitied Emilia, and could not help being desirous to see how she would resent the base artifice practised on her when she should discover it, and also how Corisca would conduct the plot she had contrived. It was no dif-

ficult

difficult matter for me to know the house they were going to, both by the description I had heard given of it the day before by Corisca, and also by what I had been told by other people concerning its commodiousness for intrigue; so I no sooner found a hackney-coach was ordered, than I hastily quitted the post I was in, made the best of my way to the place of rendezvous, got there before them, took up my stand at the entrance, saw them alight, and followed them into a well-furnished spacious room, to which they were usher'd by a spruce waiter.

Wine and biscuits were immediately served up; and the company, after having refreshed themselves with this little regale, went to walk in the gardens, which I found indeed very pleasant, well-laid out into parterres and knots, and larger than I could have imagined. Favenius led Corisca, and Palamede had Emilia by the hand, who during this promenade, took the opportunity of entertaining her with many tender speeches, but intermixed with nothing that the most chaste ear might not have listen'd to without a blush upon the face. I was sorry, however, to observe that she receiv'd what he said with a certain languishment in her eyes, which embolden'd him to go on, and made me fear that he had indeed a secret ascendancy over her uncautious, unsuspecting heart.

On their return into the house, a table was spread with every thing that could excite the appetite or exhilarate the spirits; the cheerfulness and good humour of the guests gave a double relish to the repast; wit and sparkling champaign crown'd the board; and tho' the ladies allay'd the too great potency of the one by the assistance of water, yet the other flow'd with no less strength and vigour. After some hours had been passed in the height of gaiety, Corisca on a sudden looked upon her watch, and assuming a more serious air than she was accustomed.

customed to wear, told the company that it was near one o'clock, and they must think of departing for London; to which Favonius replied,

Favonius. Among all the ridiculous things mankind was ever guilty of; I know none more so than the having set their wits to work to invent a machine, and then submitting to be governed by it.

Corisca. There are many other laws, as well as this, by which the silly world have bound themselves to go contrary to the primitive rules of nature and inclination, indulging by stealth only those pleasures which they were born freely to enjoy; but however, all these customs, disagreeable as they are to people of real wit and spirit, must in some measure be complied with, or the stupid vulgar would presently accuse us of irregularity and indecency.

Palamede. I look upon every one here, madam, to be above the censures of the vulgar, yet I will not pretend to enter into any arguments on that head; and dare answer for Favonius, as well as for myself, that he would not presume to detain you a moment beyond the time you think proper to go.

Emilia. Indeed, gentlemen, I think, and I believe Corisca does so too, that to stay any longer at this time would rather diminish than add to the satisfaction we have hitherto enjoyed.

Favonius. After such a declaration, madam, any farther pressures to the contrary, on our part, might justly be looked upon as impertinent and troublesome: it is certainly your province to command, ours implicitly to obey.

In speaking these last words, he went out of the room with Palamede, as it might be supposed to discharge the reckoning of the house; but in a few minutes returned, and with a seeming concern in their faces said, that the coachman, either by having got drunk or mistaking his orders, had gone away soon after he had set them down; on which

Corisca

Corisca affected to be extremely surprised, and Emilia being really so, they both cry'd out at the same time,

Corisca. This is the oddest accident sure that ever happen'd.

Emilia. Bless me ! which way shall we get home ?

Palamede. As for going home, madam, it is a thing quite out of the question ; we have enquir'd, and there is no possibility of procuring either coach, chariot, post-chaise, or any sort of carriage whatever, 'till the morning breaks ; so, ladies, you must content yourselves with being our guests for the remainder of the night.

Corisca. Well, since it is so, we must e'en make a virtue of necessity, and divert ourselves as well as we can.

Palamede. It would be an unpardonable vanity in us, madam, to imagine that any thing in our conversation could compensate for the want of your repose ; we will therefore order a bed to be got ready for you two ladies, while Favonius and myself watch the approach of day, in order to provide a vehicle to carry us to town.

Corisca. No, no, by no means ; we will all share the same fate ; it would be strange, indeed, if four people of taste and spirit could not find some way to amuse each other for the space of one night.

While she was speaking, a concert of flutes, a hautboy, a double courtal, and some other wind-music, on a sudden saluted their ears ; — on which she cry'd out,

Corisca. Hark ! music ! if it continues, it will very well atone for the loss of a few hours sleep.

Emilia. Nothing ever happen'd so fortunately for me ; I love music as I love my life, especially of this sort.

In speaking this she ran hastily to the window and threw up the sash, in order to hear the several instru-

instruments more distinctly; Palamede follow'd, and they both seem'd absorb'd in a most profound attention for some minutes, which Favonius and Corisca observing, took that opportunity of passing softly behind them, and slipp'd out of the room. Emilia turning her head presently after, with a design, as I suppose, to say something either to the one or the other, was surpris'd at seeing neither of them there, and cry'd out to Palamede,

Emilia. Bless me! what is become of Favonius and Corisca?

Palamede. I know not, madam; perhaps they are gone down into the garden, to be nearer to the music, which seems to proceed from the lower end of the walk.

Emilia. Very likely; they might have told us, however; but since it is so, we will follow them.

Palamede. With all my heart, madam; but first permit me to reveal a secret to you which you ought to be told, and my breast has long labour'd with an impatience of discovering.

Emilia. A secret! What secret can you have with me that would be worth losing one note of this music to listen to?

Palamede. I hope you will be of another opinion, madam, when I shall tell you that the whole happiness of my future life, and even my soul's eternal peace, depends upon it.

Emilia. You may tell me what you will, but I shall believe nothing of the matter; so let us rejoin our friends.

It is not so much by what people say, as by the manner in which they deliver themselves, that the sincerity of their words may be guess'd at; and I was heartily glad to find, both by the looks of Emilia and the tone of her voice, that she indeed had more inclination to do as she had propos'd, than to stay and suffer herself to be entertain'd by Palamede in the

the way she might easily perceive he was about to do it. The discreet intentions of this young lady, however, could avail her but little in her present situation; Palamede got between her and the door as she was endeavouring to go out, and throwing himself upon his knees before her, and at the same time catching fast hold of both her hands, said to her,

Palamede. No, charming Emilia! I have not so long languished for an opportunity like this to let it now escape me! you must, you shall hear me. By Heaven, I love you! love you to the most raging height the passion can inspire! For many, many tedious weeks you have been the only object of my nightly visions and waking thoughts,—and—

He was going on, but Emilia interrupted him by replying in these terms, accompanied with an air full of resentment and confusion:

Emilia. Fye, Palamede, this raillery is impertinent and insipid, and what I could not have expected to be treated with by a person who has the character of good sense and breeding.

Palamede. Cruelly urged! oh could you see into my heart, you would find it all devoted to you! devoted to you with a tenderness so perfect as can be equall'd by nothing but the charms that have subdued it. Frown not, adorable Emilia, nor struggle to get loose; for by all my hopes, never will I quit the grasp I have taken of you, nor rise from the posture I am in, 'till I have convinced you of the sincerity, as well as ardency, of the flame you have kindled in me.

Emilia. Sir, this nocturnal declaration is little consistent with that respect which is always the attendant of an honourable passion: if you had, indeed, any thoughts of me of the nature you pretend, I am no recluse, and you might have found a more proper season to acquaint me with them.

Palamede.

Palamede. The passion I am inflamed with, is not of a nature to submit to the dull forms observ'd by vulgar lovers. Besides, what season can be more fit for love than night, the friend of love? Turn your eyes towards the window, and behold the silver moon, with all the thousand twinkling stars; see how sweet, how mild they shine, with what benevolent aspects they dart their rays upon us; listen to the melodious sounds you just now praised; will not all these soften your soul, melt you into pity, and make you think such love as mine deserves some recompence?

Emilia. I'll hear no more; unhand me, sir, and give me liberty to seek our friends, or be assured my cries shall raise the house.

He then let go her hands, and rose from the posture he had been in; but still kept his back close against the door, while with a half smile he replied to what she had said in this manner:

Palamede. Madam, you are obeyed in part, and if I acquiesce to every thing you demand, it is not to be imagined you would be one jot less in my power than now;—our friends are too deeply engaged with each other to suffer themselves to be interrupted; and as to the people of the house, they know their distance, and are always extremely deaf on these occasions:

On hearing him speak thus she burst into a flood of tears, and throwing herself into a chair, cry'd out,

Emilia. Oh, heavens! is this possible? can Corisca be so vile? am I betray'd? basely given up by her to infamy and ruin?

On hearing her make this exclamation, he left the place where he had been standing, and seated himself near her; then taking one of her hands and pressing it tenderly to his lips, spoke to this effect:

Palamede. Not so, my angel! by heaven, the transactions of this night shall be for ever a sacred
and

and inviolable secret! not even Favonius nor Corisca shall be acquainted with it, if you desire the contrary; I know they will laugh at me, but no matter; I can bear all that, and much more, to comply with the least request made by my dear Emilia; oh then be kind, and bless my longing wishes! let no reluctance damp the coming joys, but yield to share the happiness you give!

The consternation of Emilia, on finding she was exposed to the danger she was now in, by the very woman whom she most had loved, and most believed her friend, had thrown her into so profound a reverie, that I much question whether she heard any part of what Palamede had lately been speaking to her, 'till closing his protestations with a strenuous embrace, she started up, broke from him, and looking wildly round the room she espy'd two swords, which Favonius and Palamede had pluck'd off on their entrance, and put in a window;—she snatch'd up one of them, and drawing it out of the scabbard in an instant, held the point to her breast, saying at the same time,

Emilia. Here is at least a refuge from dishonour;—that base woman, who thought to make me as vile as I now find she is herself, shall meet with a disappointment she perhaps does not expect; if you offer to approach me, or advance one step beyond the spot you stand upon, this goes into my heart.

The amazement, the shock, the confusion Palamede was in at this action is altogether impossible to describe; her words, her looks, her voice, convincing him she was indeed in earnest, he remain'd speechless, without motion, his eyes fixed on her in a kind of stupid stare, and seem'd like one transfix'd with thunder: at length, recovering himself a little, he said to her, in a faltering voice,

Palamede. For heaven's sake, madam, wound not thus my soul by the sight of your despair! you have

have no cause; it is certain that I long have lov'd you, but never had a thought of seducing your innocence; the plot to bring you hither was not of my contriving; 'tis true I came into it, as where is the man who would not? but be assured I am no ravisher, nor capable of owing my pleasures to brutal violence: oh therefore throw aside that cruel weapon, or turn the point on me; and if I make the least attempt to offend your modesty, bury it to the hilt within my bosom.

Emilia. Sir, I once looked upon you as a man of honour, and should rejoice to find you could redeem yourself in my opinion.

Palamede. By all that's sacred, not the utmost gratification of my loosest wishes could have given me half the joy as now, to prove myself not wholly unworthy the esteem of such exalted virtue. Charming Emilia! perfect in mind as well as form! in both angelic! behold me your convert! The love I had for you is now rarified into adoration! your virtue, like chemists gold, turns all into itself, and leaves no grosser particles behind! forgive what is past, and never—never more will I presume to entertain you with discourses less chaste and pure than your own virgin thoughts!

Emilia. May I believe this penitence sincere?

Palamede. You may, by heaven! and when I relapse into my former crime, may infamy, diseases, the contempt of the whole world, your eternal hatred, and every other curse fall upon me!

Emilia. Then find some way, if possible, to take me immediately from this place, and conduct me safe to my apartment.

Palamede. My readiness to obey you, madam, I hope, will prove the integrity of my present intentions, and be some atonement for the past; it is my happiness to have it in my power to do what you require with much more ease than you imagine;

gine; you shall no longer, beautiful Emilia, be imposed upon! the coachman, whom he pretended had left us, has only put up at an inn not above forty yards distant from this house; I suppose he may be gone to bed by this time, as we told him we should not return to London 'till the morning; but I will send and have him roused.

He had scarce made an end of speaking these words, when he rang the bell, and a waiter coming presently up, he gave him the necessary orders for fulfilling the promise he had just given to Emilia; on which that young lady, with the utmost satisfaction in her voice and eyes, cry'd out, 'This is truly 'honourable, indeed, and worthy of yourself.'

Something which that instant started into the mind of Palamede, hinder'd him from making any answer, or even, perhaps, from hearing what she said; he rang the bell a second time with all his force, and call'd for pen, ink, and paper; which being brought, he told Emilia that decency and good manners would not suffer him to depart without taking some notice of the occasion to Favonius, with whom he had always lived in a perfect good understanding, and therefore entreated her permission to write a few lines to that gentleman: the request was too reasonable not to be complied with, and he sat down and dictated the following little epistle:

'My dear friend,

'Things have happened very different from what I was made to expect in regard to Emilia: in fine, she is not a woman, but an angel; as such I shall always esteem her, and think it my glory to obey every command she is pleased to lay upon me: the first she has honour'd me with, is to remove her hence, and conduct her to her own apartment, which I am just now about to do. I have no opportunity

‘ opportunity to discharge the music or the expences
 ‘ of the house, so beg you will take the whole upon
 ‘ you, and meet me to-morrow evening at Braund’s,
 ‘ where we will sup together and settle that affair.
 ‘ Make what compliments and excuses you shall
 ‘ think proper for me to Corisca, and believe me,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ PALAMEDE.’

While Palamede was thus employ’d, it also came into Emilia’s head to let Corisca know some part of the repentment she had conceived against her; accordingly she took another pen out of the standish, and expressed herself in these terms :

‘ MADAM,

‘ What the united report of all who know you
 ‘ could never have made me believe, your behaviour this night has not only convinced me of, but
 ‘ also that the tongue of malice can find nothing
 ‘ wherewith to aggravate your real guilt. Was it
 ‘ not enough, oh, most ungenerous woman! to sink
 ‘ your own honour and reputation in eternal infamy,
 ‘ but you must also endeavour to drag others into
 ‘ perdition with you! Know, to your confusion,
 ‘ that I happily escaped the snare you had laid for
 ‘ me; and I shall reap this benefit by my late danger,
 ‘ as to avoid the company of a person, whom to pre-
 ‘ serve an acquaintance with must in the end have
 ‘ been the ruin of my character, if not of my virtue;
 ‘ for be assured, I shall henceforward be as careful
 ‘ to shun your presence, as ever I was eager to come
 ‘ into it. Here ceases all farther intercourse be-
 ‘ tween us. May the disappointment of your base de-
 ‘ signs on me, serve as a warning to you not to at-
 ‘ tempt the like on any other equally inadvertent
 ‘ and uncautious, as the much deceiv’d

‘ EMILIA!’

They had just finished, and made up the above billets, when the waiter returned and told Palamede that he had, tho' not without some difficulty, prevailed on the coachman to rise, and that before he left the inn, he had seen him go into the stable to bring out the horses. Palamede then gave him the letter he had wrote to Favonius, saying, 'Be sure to deliver this to the gentleman who came with us, as soon as he shall be stirring, and let him know, I shall send the coach back in the morning.'— Emilia also put into his hands her epistle to Corisca, with these words: 'And let the lady know I left this for her.' The fellow reply'd, that they might depend he would be punctual in discharging the commission they entrusted him with, and then withdrew.

Finding my Chrystalline Tablets were now overcharged, I was obliged to shut them up, so can relate no farther particulars of what conversation pass'd between Palamede and Emilia during the small time they waited for the coach to carry them away; and can only say in general, that the greatest reserve and distance was observed on both sides: Emilia, though now perfectly satisfied with the contrition of Palamede, thought it would be imprudent to appear too gay; and Palamede, fearful to renew her apprehensions, behaved towards her with all the solemnity of a Chinese Mandarin.

On their going down they were met at the bottom of the stairs by the woman who kept this tavern, or rather brothel; who ushering in what she had to say with a low curtsy, told Emilia that she flattered herself with the expectation of her sleeping there that night, and hoped nothing disagreeable had happen'd to occasion her departure at so unseasonable an hour; adding, that she should never forgive herself if any thing in her house had disoblighd so sweet a young lady. Emilia answered this fawning speech

speech only with a look of contempt; but Palamede told her, she need be under no concern on that score, the lady had no objections to her house, but chose never to sleep out of her own apartment. No more was said; they went into the coach, and I follow'd on foot; for I had not curiosity enough to make me stay the remainder of the night in that place, for no other purpose than to see how Favonius and Corisca would behave on being told that Palamede and Emilia were gone, and receiving the epistles that gentleman and lady had left for them. I had a long walk home; but my Invisibilty secur'd me from the danger of any insults; and the satisfaction that rose in my mind, on the noble conquest virtue had gained over vice, made the way seem much less tedious.

A few days after I was inform'd, by the report of the town, that Palamede made his public addresses to Emilia: being willing to be better convinced of the truth of this matter, I made several visits to Emilia's apartment, and found that in fact the thing was as I had been told. Palamede, who really loved Emilia much more than perhaps he was sensible of himself, before this proof she had given him of her virtue, got over that objection which the scantiness of her fortune had before laid in his way; and Emilia, who had liked him as much as Corisca had said she did, gave all the encouragement he could wish to his honourable passion. I look upon the affair to be now in a manner concluded on, and that a very short time will consummate their mutual wishes; a catastrophe, which I doubt not but every generous reader will heartily rejoice at as well as myself.

Favonius, who is in reality a man of strict honour and good principles, though somewhat too sanguine in his amours, still continues his intimacy with Palamede, and highly applauds his conversion

in favour of the fair inspirer of his honourable flame ; Corisca bites her lips whenever the name of Emilia is mention'd, and endeavours all she can to traduce that virtue which she had not the power to destroy ; but all she says on that score serves only to shew more plainly her own bad heart ; and Emilia, by restraining all conversation with her, has entirely regain'd that esteem and good opinion which she had well nigh lost.



CHAP. III.

Contains the Rehearsal of a Conversation which the Author accidentally happened to be witness of, and looks upon himself as bound by an indispensable Obligation to make public ; though perfectly conscious, from his Observations of Mankind, that there are many of his Readers who will labour all they can to bring these Pages into Discredit.

ONE whom I shall always rank among the number of our best English Authors, tells us in a justly esteem'd poem, that

Wisdom is still to sloth too great a slave :
None are so busy as the fool and knave.

How widely different are the pictures drawn of a person whose prudence makes him act and talk with circumspection and reserve ! How various are the representations made of him ! He has almost as many characters as there are speakers of him ; by the abundance one hears of him the judgment is distracted, and there is no forming a right idea of what he truly is. One cannot go into any company without hearing some mention made of Lord Honorious, yet one shall seldom find any two people agree in their opinion concerning him, either as

to his abilities or principles, whether in religious, moral, or political matters. He is no follower of the court, yet does not totally avoid going thither; he professes himself a member of the established church, yet converses freely with those of different persuasions; he listens attentively to the arguments urged by persons of all parties and all sects, without offering any of his own, or giving his opinion which are wrong or which are right.

For this reason all the zealots, both in religion and politics, brand him with lukewarmness, and say he is a man of an uncertain way of thinking; and has no settled principle of acting. Some few there are who applaud his moderation, but many more, who look upon it as a piece of low cunning; thereby to cover some latent designs he had within his bosom; but of what nature these are, I have heard many warm disputes about. Some will needs have him in the interest of the Pretender; and others, that he is secretly a tool of the Ministry: some have confidently averr'd, that they have seen a white rose carried into his house on the tenth of June, and others that he has worn a yellow waistcoat on the birth-day of his present Majesty; as if an innocent flower, or the colour of a piece of silk, were sufficient tokens to shew the wishes of the wearer's heart.

As to his oeconomy in private life, he is not at all expensive in dress, equipage, or the furniture of his house, chusing to appear below his rank, than in any particular to exceed it. This is frequently attributed to his covetousness, while more favourable judges suppose it to be owing to his contempt of the modish fopperies of the age. He partakes of all the pleasures of the town, but never pursues them to an excess, or with eagerness: the graver sort of people ascribe this to his discretion; and the more gay, to want of spirit and coldness of constitution.

tion. Thus apt are we to form a vain judgment on things we know nothing of : the heart of man is incomprehensible, unless discovered by himself in some glaring proof either of virtue or vice ; the first he may not have an opportunity to set forth in any conspicuous light, and the latter he may have artifice and hypocrisy enough to gloss over and conceal. How impossible then is it to be certain to which of these he is in reality devoted !

Among the variety of descriptions and reports in relation to Lord Honorius, I found, notwithstanding, that it was agreed on by all hands, that though he would not suffer himself to be imposed upon by his tradesmen, yet he always took care their bills should be paid with the utmost exactness and punctuality, and that he never dealt with foreigners. These articles, however insignificant they may seem to some of those who call themselves the polite world, I confess, gave me such an idea both of his prudence and justice, as made me immediately join with those who spoke the greatest things in his praise in other respects. But being desirous of penetrating more deeply into the reality of this nobleman's disposition, I resolved to try how my Invisibiltyship would serve that end, and accordingly made a visit one morning at his house.

I pass'd through several neat rooms, the furniture of which was rich, and befitting the dignity and fortune of the owner ; but had nothing of gaudiness in it. At last I found the person I went to seek ; he was in a closet within his dressing-room, and had a book in his hand : I was curious to see what was the subject of his meditations ; and looking over his shoulder, perceived it was the poems of our English Pindar, the celebrated Mr. Cowley ;—the page he was employ'd in on my entrance contain'd, among others, these lines :

Oh

Oh fountains ! when in you shall I,
 Ear'd of unpeaceful thoughts, myself espy !
 O fields ! O woods ! when shall I be made
 The happy tenant of your shade !
 Here's the spring-head of Pleasure's flood,
 Where all the riches lie,
 That she has coin'd and stamp'd for good,
 To charm the mind as well as eye.
 Pride and ambition here,
 Only in far-fetch'd metaphors appear ;
 Here's naught but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
 And nought but echo flatter.
 The Gods, when they descended hither
 From Heaven, did always chuse their way ;
 And therefore we may boldly say,
 That is the way too thither.

When he came to this part of the poem, he
 stopp'd and cry'd out with the greatest emphasis,
 ' Charming, inimitable Cowley ! How just, how
 ' truly delicate are all thy notions, and how widely
 ' different from those of the age I have the misfor-
 ' tune to live in ! If one may form a judgment, as
 ' sure one may, by the writings of seventy or eighty
 ' years ago, the genius of Britain was far unlike
 ' what it appears at present.'

He had scarce finish'd this exclamation, when a
 servant open'd the door and told him, that Sir Whim-
 sey Brainfick was come to wait upon him ; on
 which he laid aside the book, and went into the
 next chamber to receive his guest. After giving
 and returning the customary salutations of the morn-
 ing, and having seated themselves, the following
 dialogue ensued between them :

Honorius. 'Tis a wonder to see you dress'd and
 abroad thus early, Sir Whimsey : I think you are
 commonly in your first sleep after this time.

Sir Whimsy. Ay, my Lord; but pleasure must on some occasions give way to business: I have vast affairs upon my hands at present; I only snatch'd a moment to take leave of your Lordship, and two hours hence shall set out for the country.

Honorius. On your election, I suppose?

Sir Whimsy. No, no; my Lord Traffi-Traffi has secur'd me a borough without my taking the trouble of ever going near it: my business at present is down at *****, where I have a considerable estate, and I believe a pretty good interest; and I have engaged myself to strain both, as far as they will go, in favour of Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen.

Honorius. Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen! What then has Mr. Worthy, the present member, declined standing?

Sir Whimsy. No, no, my Lord, he has not declined; but we are resolved to have him out at any rate.

Honorius. I would not have you deceive yourself, Sir Whimsy; Mr. Worthy is a gentleman who I am told is highly esteem'd by his constituents, and you may be at a great deal of expence to oppose him to no purpose.

Sir Whimsy. As to the expence, I don't doubt but it will be made up to me some way or other; I have my eye upon a place; and I can tell you, I am as good as promis'd either that or a ribband.

Honorius. The character I have heard of Mr. Worthy makes me sorry so powerful an opposition should be set on foot against him.

Sir Whimsy. He has been stubborn, my Lord, very stubborn; has voted against the Jew and Clandestine Marriage-bills; and it is not fit the Ministry should be affronted. Your Lordship, I suppose, is a friend to the Ministry.

Honorius. Sir, I never gave any man reason to believe I was the contrary.

Sir

Sir Whimsy. No, no, your Lordship is too wife ; those who are friends to the Ministry are friends to themselves : for my own part, if it were not to oblige them, I would not give two pence who had the election at *****, or anywhere else. But I must beg your Lordship's pardon, I have a thousand things to dispatch, and would not be waited for by four or five gentlemen who accompany me on the same expedition ; so your Lordship's most obedient.

Honorius. Yours, Sir Whimsy ; I wish you a good journey.

With these words they parted.—Lord Honorius saw him to the top of the staircase, and then turn'd back to his closet, saying to himself as he went,—
 • What a wild world is this ! How do men toil to
 • bring infamy on themselves, and entail certain
 • ruin on themselves !

As I thought, by the little sample I had seen, that it was now in my power to make a better judgment of the sentiments of this nobleman than by all I had heard from others, I was following Sir Whimsy down stairs ; but on hearing some debate between a plain, honest-looking countryman and a spruce footman, who as I found afterwards had been but lately taken into my Lord's service, I stopped short to listen to the occasion. I soon perceived that the countryman was desirous of speaking to his Lordship, and the fellow judging by appearances, thought it too great a presumption, and would fain have turned him from the door ; but the rustick was not so easily repulsed as the other had imagined : the first words I could hear distinctly were as follow :

Footman. I tell you, friend, I know not whether my Lord is at home or not ; or if he is, whether he pleases to be seen : — but if you let me know what business you have with him, and

from whom you come, I will take care his Lordship shall be informed, and you may have your answer to-morrow.

Countryman. Goodlack, Mr. Skipjack, who are you? My Lord is not used to have such malepert fellows about him: but if I must not see my Lord, pray let me speak to Mr. Downright, the gentleman that dresses and waits upon him; he knows me well enough, and will give me a better answer.

The footman then vouchsafed to call the person he mentioned, and the countryman had the satisfaction to find himself well received: Mr. Downright shook him cordially by the hand, told him he was glad to see him in London, and ask'd him what business had brought him hither; to which the other reply'd,

Countryman. In good troth I did not come upon pleasure; I have business, very great business with my Lord, and would fain speak to him, if so be I may have liberty to come into his presence, as you know, Mr. Downright, I have done many a good time in the country; but that Mr. Finikin there, with his pig-tail wig, stands as it were like a mud-wall to keep every body off the house.

Mr. Downright. Oh, he did not know you, Mr. Goodacre; and besides, he has lived in families where nobody without a coach or chair are admitted; but I will acquaint my Lord you are here; he is alone, and I am sure will see you.

Countryman. Thank you, Mr. Downright: it is well there are some civil people in this same town.

Mr. Downright then went on his message; the footman look'd very sheepish and sneak'd away, while the countryman strutted about the hall as great as an emperor, 'till the valet returned and desired him to walk up. As I took Mr. Goodacre
for

for one of my Lord's tenants, and imagin'd he was only come on the score of renewing a lease, or some other country affairs relating to himself, which I had no manner of curiosity to pry into, I was in some debate within myself whether I should stay, or go directly out of the house, the door being then open ; but a certain impulse, the meaning of which I cannot account for, sway'd me to pursue my first thought, and I turn'd back and accompanied him into the presence of my Lord, from whom he met with a reception not commonly given by persons of quality to a man of his plain appearance, except on particular occasions. His Lordship made him sit down in a chair very near himself, and, with a smiling countenance and the greatest affability in his voice and air, told him he was glad to see him look so well and hearty ; that he hoped his wife and family enjoy'd the same share of good health ; and then ask'd what business had brought him up to London : to the former part of these obliging speeches he only answered with several low bows ; but to the latter reply'd in these terms :

Goodacre. Why, my Lord, your Lordship knows we are going to have a new parliament, and belike there will be a great bustle all over the kingdom about elections ; and no wonder if there be ; every one makes us such fair promises when they come to ask us for our votes, that 'tis a hard matter to know which we can most depend upon ; we have been served basely, very basely, by some of our representatives, and it behoves us to be very cautious for the future.

Honorius. Very true, Mr. Goodacre ; it does so indeed ; and I hope the nation will think so.

Goodacre. Now as to our borough, no man could make finer speeches to us, or pretend he had our interest more at heart, than 'Squire Earnly, before he was chosen ; yet he no sooner got into the

house, than he shew'd he did not care a straw for us, laugh'd at all our petitions and remonstrances; and, I am told, made a merit of it to the Ministry.

Honorius. I am afraid there are too many who have done so. Does the same gentleman set up again?

Goodacre. No, my Lord; he would have no chance for it if he did; we know him too well, he sees that well enough; but 'tis thought, however, that he will get in for some place or other.

Honorius. Nothing more likely. But do you hear who intends to offer himself in his stead?

Goodacre. Yes, my Lord; great interest is already making for one Capt. Sashbright: he is as fine a person, indeed, as the sun shines upon; but we know nothing of him; he is recommended by Sir Courtly Jobber, and has brought a power of money down with him: they went together in Sir Courtly's coach to ***** fair, bought a many things, and gave them to every body about them; guineas and broad pieces fly about like hail; any one, almost, may have them for picking up.

Honorius. So then he may easily carry it, I suppose?

Goodacre. I cannot tell that, my Lord; there was a numerous meeting at the Rose about a fortnight ago, and 'Squire Wellwood of the Green was put in nomination; his family has been settled for a long time at *****; he lives most part in the country, does a great deal of good among the poor, and is mainly beloved.

Honorius. I know him, Mr. Goodacre; he is certainly a very worthy gentleman.

Goodacre. Ay, my Lord, he would have it all to nothing, if it was not for one consideration.

Honorius. What is that?

Goodacre. The Captain has promised, that if he gets his election, he will procure an act of Parliam-
ment

ment for a new road to be cut, at the Government's expence, from ***** to ***** , which your Lordship knows would be a great advantage to our market.

Honorius. A very great one indeed.

Goodacre. Ay, my Lord, if we were sure it would be done; but there lies the query. Some people will promise any thing to gain their point, and never think of it afterwards. We all know Squire Wellwood to be a noble gentleman, and so may Capt. Sashbright too; he may or he may not. Now we are strangely divided in our opinions, whether we ought to leave the certain good for the uncertain better, and have at length resolved to be decided by your Lordship.

Honorius. By me!

Goodacre. Yes, my Lord; we know your Lordship to be a wise man, and a true lover of your country.

Honorius. I have always thought, Mr. Goodacre, that to meddle in these things would prove me deserving neither of the one nor the other of the epithets you give me; every elector ought to give his vote according to the dictates of his conscience, and not suffer himself to be sway'd by any interest or motive whatever; and for a nobleman, or other person of distinction, to attempt, either by menaces or cajolings, to make them act to the contrary, appears to me to be the most gross encroachment on liberty that can be offered.

Goodacre. But here the case is widely different, my Lord.

Honorius. I grant it is.—— You desire my advice as a friend, not submit to be governed by me as a director; it would therefore be ungenerous, and even cruel, in me to suffer you to be deluded by false pretences, when it is so easily in my power to put you upon your guard against them. In the first

first place, you ought to consider, that Capt. Saff-bright, whatever his character may otherwise be, is an officer in the army, and as such it is his interest to promote the continuance of a standing army, and consequently of those taxes which are necessary for the support of it. In the second, Sir Courtly Jobber, who it seems is the person who recommends him, has for a long time, to my certain knowledge, been an agent for the ministry, and is indebted for his title, and the best part of the estate he is in possession of, merely to the good services he has rendered them.

Goodacre. Ay marry, these things are worth thinking of, indeed : so I suppose, my Lord, the money he so plentifully throws about is none of his own ?

Honorius. Not a doit ; he will be reimburs'd with interest.

Goodacre. And yet I know not, my Lord, but there may be some among us foolish enough to be inveigled by this bait. Alackaday ! we country people are ignorant of such practices ; we little think what the great folks in town are doing ; and a many there are that would not believe a word of it without good authority. Oh, I wish your Lordship were down at Egum-Hall at this critical juncture !

Honorius. I will be there, Mr. Goodacre, in spite of the aversion I have always had to appear at elections, or to distinguish myself on any occasion ; my love to the place which gave me birth, and good will to my countrymen, shall overbalance all other considerations ; I will do all I can to strengthen the weak eyes which are in danger of being dazzled with Sir Courtly's gold, and shew them the false lustre of his fleeting promises.

Goodacre. Heaven bless your Lordship ! a noble resolution !

Honorius.

Honorius. When do you return, Mr. Goodacre?

Goodacre. I shall lie but this one night in town, my Lord, and set out betimes to-morrow morning.

Honorius. I will not be two days behind you: in the mean time you may tell them what I say.

Goodacre. It will be joyful news to some.

There passed no farther conversation between them; the honest countryman rose up to take his leave, full of transport at the success of his negotiation; but Lord Honorius would not permit him to depart till he had rung the bell for Mr. Downright, and given orders that he should be made welcome with the best entertainment the house afforded. I left him to accept the invitation, and returned to my apartment, well satisfied in my mind that I was now enabled to form a right judgment of this nobleman's principles and disposition.



CHAP. IV.

Presents the Reader with a Detail of a very remarkable Incident, which, I believe, if considered with a due Attention, there are but few People, especially of the fair Sex, who will not find themselves enabled to become better Members of Society by having perused.

A Certain sacred writer tells us, that the tongue is an unruly member, and preaches much concerning the government of it; but I dare not presume to insist too much on his authority, as he has been, with others of his cotemporaries, pretty much exploded; and I might be looked upon, by my polite readers, as a very old-fashioned silly fellow to make any mention of him. But I may venture, without running the risk of being read with a horse-

horse-laugh, to quote the words of another very great and learned person of a more modern date, who says, that the tongue is the most dangerous of all weapons ; that it is capable of destroying all peace, all love, all harmony in the world ; of sowing dissensions among families ; of disuniting the hearts of the dearest friends and relations ; of ruining the reputation and fortune of whomsoever it is levelled against ; and that even murders and the worst of mischiefs may be occasioned by it.

That the tongue, when it becomes the instrument of a malicious heart, carries a thousand daggers in it, is a truth which the observation of every one evinces. But this is not all ; public abuse or private scandal, defamation and detraction, are not the only vices of the tongue ; an unguarded word is frequently productive of the most unhappy consequences ; it wounds, as it were, by chance-medley ; and a person may be stabbed in the most tender part without any intention in the giver of the blow. A talkative disposition, or, in other words, a passion for repeating every thing one sees and hears, or even guesses at, is extremely dangerous to society ; and tho' it is a foible proceeding rather from levity than ill nature, sometimes produces the same effects : those guilty of it, perhaps, may mean no hurt ; but, alas ! they consider not how far the person to whom they are speaking may be interested in the report they make, and that what they imagine of no moment may stab him to the quick. Nothing is more common than for people to hurt thus at random, and by their rashness to occasion accidents, which, if they foresaw, they would be most careful to prevent,—as a late poet emphatically enough expresses it :

Thinking to shoot my arrow o'er the house,
I have kill'd my brother:

But

But this inadvertency, as great a weakness as it doubtless is, has in it somewhat yet more excusable than to reveal a secret which we are conscious must give the hearer pain. I confess that this is sometimes done through good-will ; but then it is a very mistaken good-will in many cases. If I know a person sustains an injury, and has it in his power to redress the grievance, it is certainly my duty to acquaint him with it ; but when the evil is without a remedy, it is infinitely more kind to suffer him to remain in ignorance. To be well deceived, is almost equal to not being deceived at all ; our happiness consists in the imagination of it ; and if we firmly believe ourselves possessed of what we wish, it is the same thing as being so in reality. How cruel is it then for any one to draw back the friendly curtain that hides ill fortune from us, and compel us to behold our wretchedness ! Every one who is thus unhappily undeceived may cry out with *Bellamira* in the play,

————— Ah, cruel friend !

Why did'st thou wake me from my dream of bliss ?

Why bring me from that scene of fancied joys,

To one of real anguish, horror, and despair !

Many unhappy instances of these well-meant, ill offices have come to my knowledge since I was in possession of the Gift of Invisibility ; but I shall recite only one of them, which, as it is a very late transaction, and but few people know the real truth of, is at present a matter of much speculation among those who are any way acquainted with the parties concerned, or have even heard their names.

Meroveus and *Deidamia* were an extreme happy pair ; the railers against marriage could find nothing in the conduct of either of them to countenance any sarcasms on that state ; the most tender affection

nion had been the chief, if not the sole motive of the union between them; and the secure and uninterrupted possession of each other, instead of diminishing, seemed rather to increase their mutual ardour; and their first bridal fondness appeared in their behaviour after having served a more than seven years apprenticeship to Hymen. Yet, how on a sudden have we found all this sweet serenity turned into storms and tempests! Meroveus and Deidamia, who it was thought could not have lived a single week out of each other's presence, are now parted, according to all probability, parted, to meet no more in love.

Besides the many great accomplishments which justified the affection they so long had towards each other, both of them were accounted persons of an excellent understanding and solid sense; nothing therefore could have more amazed the world than that they should come to this open rupture, even though some little cause of complaint had happened either on the one side or the other. An event so strange, so little dream'd of, put all conjecture to a stand; people pretended not even to guess what should be the occasion, much less to unravel so great a mystery; the accomplishment of that work was reserved by Fate for the Invisible Spy alone. The manner in which I made this discovery, I shall relate as concisely as the conversation which let me into it will admit of.

As I was one day taking a solitary walk on Constitution-Hill, I saw Deidamia leaning on the arm of Eutracia, a lady of birth and fortune, who had been bred up with her at the boarding-school, and ever since been her most intimate friend and companion: just as they approached the place where I was, the following dialogue began between them.

Deidamia.

Deidamia. Now for the secret you have to tell me ; methinks I have a more than ordinary impatience to hear it, and we cannot be more retired ; not a living soul is near us, and there is no danger of any one coming to interrupt our discourse, as all the world are in the Mall.

Eutracia. I will not keep you long in suspense, my dear ; but first you must answer two or three questions I have to ask you, and then resolve to arm yourself with all the fortitude you are mistress of, not to be too much shocked at what I shall relate.

Deidamia. I cannot conceive that there is any thing which either you or any one else can tell me, capable of giving me a shock. But pray, what is it you would know from me ?

Eutracia. The town looks upon you as one of the most happy women in it ; is it true that you are really so ?

Deidamia. Indeed, my dear, I think myself so ; and if I should labour to be more blest'd, know not how to form a single wish beyond what I possess.

Eutracia. There are many private causes of disquiet, which prudence obliges us to conceal. Are you thoroughly convinced of the affection of your husband ?

Deidamia. I never had the least cause to doubt it ; and the tenderness I have for him is so sincere and delicate, as I think would make me easily perceive a want of it in him. But wherefore do you ask ? you cannot have any reason to suspect him.

Eutracia. Ah, poor Deidamia !

Deidamia. Why do you sigh, and look so piteously upon me ? some wretch has certainly belied Meroveus to you.

Eutracia. No : but one more interrogatory, and I have done. Does he never absent himself with-
out

out letting you know where he goes? never lie out of his own house?

Deidamia. Very seldom, and that but lately; an intimate friend of his makes his addresses to a young lady at Hammer-smith; he frequently desires my husband's company with him, and they sometimes stay all night, when having supped there, it is dangerous to return to London, as the roads are now infested.

Eutracia. How easy is it to deceive the innocent! Meroveus is a villain.

Deidamia. How, Eutracia! a villain! had any other called him so, my resentment should have shewn how much I despised so base an accusation.

Eutracia. Alas! 'tis your own love and honour makes you so tenacious of his; but he is false in both; and I again repeat the name, he is a villain, and will put it in your power to prove him so, by the testimony of your own eyes and ears, provided you promise to give him no previous hints that you have discovered, or even suspect his perfidy.

Deidamia. But how! how, Eutracia, is he a villain?

Eutracia. He keeps a mistress, some common wench, no doubt; but he adores, doats on her, pretends himself her husband, and those nights when you imagine him at Hammer-smith, he passes with her.

The tender Deidamia was now so overcome at these words, that her spirits quite forsook her, and she must certainly have fallen on the earth, if they had not happened to be very near a bench at the lower end of the walk, where Eutracia placed her: the keeper of the gate perceiving her condition, was so humane as to run and fetch some water, which being sprinkled on her face, soon brought her to herself. Eutracia, on seeing her fair friend thus agitated,

agitated, seemed, and I believe really was, very much concerned at what she had said; for she could not restrain some tears from falling down her eyes, while she expressed herself in these terms: 'My dearest Deidamia, if I had not thought you would have received this intelligence with more moderation, you should have been for ever ignorant of it.' The afflicted lady made no reply to these words, but in a few minutes, growing somewhat more composed, quitted the bench, and leaning on Eutraccia, the conversation was renewed in this manner:

Deidamia. Oh, Eutraccia! little are you capable of conceiving the agonies this poor distracted bleeding heart sustains! Yet I must know all. Tell me by what means you got information of this horrid secret, and how you are assured of its veracity!

Eutraccia. It was not my intention to conceal any part of it: but you must determine to listen with calmness to me.

Deidamia. I will.

Eutraccia. Well then, I will tell you all. I believe you know Mrs. Flounceit, my mantua-maker.

Deidamia. I saw her once; you may remember I was with you when she brought home your last new sack.

Eutraccia. That woman, you must know, has an interest with some foreign merchants, and can frequently oblige her customers with some curious things which are prohibited to be sold in public; she came last Monday, and acquainted me that she had several patterns of the most beautiful chintz that ever were seen; I went the next morning in order to see them, and was carried into a back parlour for the sake of privacy. As I was looking over the goods, I heard a man call from the top of the staircase.

case to know if the coach was come; I thought myself perfectly acquainted with the voice, tho' I could not just then recollect whose it was; but presently after saw Meroveus lead a woman cross the garden, at the lower end of which there is a little door, that opens into another street; a pebble, or some such thing, happening to lie in the walk, she stumbled in passing; on which he cry'd out with the greatest tenderness, 'I hope you are not hurt, my love!'—'No, reply'd she briskly,——'not at all; I cannot receive any harm when my guardian angel is so near.'——I was so astonished at what I saw and heard, that I had not power to speak, 'till Mrs. Flounceit seeing me look earnestly after them, told me they were her lodgers; that they were lately married; but some reasons obliging them to keep it private, they met each other there only once or twice a week; 'so, said she, I have very little trouble with them, and they pay me a good rent.'—'But are you sure, cry'd I, that they are man and wife? it may be an intrigue.'——'No, answered she; they were recommended to me by a gentleman who formerly lodged with me himself, one Sir David Townly.'

Deidamia. Oh heavens! Sir David Townly! Why he is the very person my husband pretends ne goes with to Hammersmith.

Eutracia. 'Tis likely he may be his confidant in this amour.

Deidamia. Yet still I know not how to think it real; one man may be like another. Are you certain it was Meroveus whom you saw?

Eutracia. As certain as that she is Deidamia to whom I am talking.——Did he not lie abroad last Monday night?

Deidamia. He did.

Eutracia.

Eutracia. And had he not on a dark-brown velvet coat, and a black waistcoat trimmed with bugles?

Deidamia. He had. Oh I can no longer shut my eyes against conviction! the dreadful truth is too glaring to be resisted, and I see myself the most miserable of women!

Eutracia. Do not think so; rather exert the spirit of an injur'd wife, detect him in his guilt, shame him to repentance, and make him sue for pardon.

Deidamia. Oh, that such love as ours has been should come to this!

Eutracia. All yet may be retriev'd; your just reproaches may make him loath his past follies, and become more yours than if he never had transgress'd: the next time he takes his pretended journey to Hammer-smith, let me know it.

Deidamia. He is gone thither now; just before you came to call me to the Park he told me Sir David had engaged his company, and he believed he should not return till morning.

Eutracia. Well then, he shall be met, my dear Deidamia; he shall be met by those he least expects or desires to see; I will take you in the morning to Mrs. Flounceit's, under pretence of bringing her a new customer; there you will have the same opportunity I had of discovering your husband's guilt, and may act as you shall judge proper on the occasion.

Deidamia. How shall I contain myself! — base — base man! — cruel deceiver of my fond, my unsuspecting heart! How bear the sight of that vile she! — that infamous deluder of his honour! — that cursed she who has robbed me of the only treasure I valued upon earth, my husband's heart.

Here

Here she burst into the most vehement exclamations; but my Chrystalline Remembrancer being already overcharged, I can only say that her behaviour verifys'd the words of Mr. Nat. Lee, who, in his description he gives of the passions of woman-kind in general, has these lines:

They shrink at thunder, dread the rustling wind,
And glitt'ring swords the brightest eyes will blind;
Yet when strong jealousy enflames the soul,
The weak will rage, and calls to tempests roll.

The ladies continued their walk 'till Phoebus beginning to withdraw his beams, they both thought proper to retire from the approaching dews. Eutracia, justly apprehending the agitations of her friend would become more violent if left alone, and at liberty to indulge them, offered to be her companion that night; which the other gladly accepted, and I saw them take coach together for Deidamia's house, after which I went home.



CHAP. V.

Which, according to the Author's Opinion, stands in no need of a Prelude, as it contains only the Sequel of an Adventure too interesting to all Degrees of People, not to demand the Attention of every Reader.

I WAS truly concerned at the injustice which I perceived poor Deidamia sustained, and but little pleased with Eutracia, either for the information she had given her of it, or for advising her to detect Menoveus in the manner concerted between them; indeed, I feared that the consequences of such an interview would be only to make the husband become more hardened in his guilt, and her affliction increase by finding her resentment disregarded.

Few

Few men can bear reproofs, much less reproaches. If ever they quit a darling folly, the reformation must come of themselves ; it must proceed from a consciousness they have done amiss, not from being told so by others. There is a pride in human nature which disdains admonition, and makes us persist in error, which, if not taken notice of, perhaps in time we might discover to be such, grow ashamed of, and amend. Besides, remonstrances from a person whom we look upon as any way our inferior, either in point of understanding or circumstances, will be so far from having any weight, that they will rather add to our contempt, and, it may be, raise in us an utter aversion to the giver. Custom has made the husband so much the head of the wife, that, tenacious of his authority, it is but seldom he submits to be influenced by her in matters of much less moment to him than his pleasures.

Indeed, when a woman is wrong'd in the manner Deidamia was, it must be confess'd that the shock is greatly trying, and that she has the strongest reason for complaining ; yet will she still find it most prudent to forbear : love and gentleness are the only weapons by which that sex can hope to conquer ; and she who attempts to have recourse to any other, only hurts herself. By seeming not to suspect her husband's vices, she will, at least, oblige him to keep them as private as he can, and also to treat her with all the respect due to her character, and the sacred union between them ; whereas by growing clamorous and impatient, she furnishes him with a pretence to use her ill, and turns the indifference he before had for her into hatred and detestation.

One of our best poets has an observation on this head, which I think is very well worthy of the serious attention of all who are either injured in

reality, or imagine themselves to be so, yet find it their interest to preserve an amicable correspondence with the person guilty of the injury ; as it is certain that no man, detected in the thing which he wishes to conceal, can ever love the person by whom he is detected. The words of the author I mentioned are these :

Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong ;

But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.

These reflections, together with my impatience to see how Deidamia would support the full conviction of her husband's falshood, so much took up my mind, that it was a considerable time before I remembered how great an impediment lay between me and the gratification of my curiosity. Mrs. Flounceit's house was to be the scene of action ; and the ladies, during their whole conversation, had made no mention in what street, nor even in what quarter of the town, that woman lived : however, as I supposed her to be a noted woman in her business, I hoped to get over this difficulty ; and did so, by sending an emissary to enquire among the mercers, hoop petticoat-makers, and other such people who are employ'd in the equipment of the ladies, and I went not to bed without receiving the direction I stood in need of.

As I knew not the hour in which Meroveus and the partner of his looser pleasures would be preparing to depart, nor that in which Deidamia would be conducted by Eutracia to behold this proof of her misfortune, I took care to go very early to Mrs. Flounceit's, and was obliged to wait a considerable time before the door happened to be opened, to let any one pass in or out :—at last, however, it was so, I got an opportunity to enter, went into the back parlour, and posted myself in
that

that corner of it which I thought would be the safest and most commodious. My patience was not here put to any long trial: the ladies arrived a few minutes after I came, usher'd into the room by Mrs. Flounceit, who placed them on a settee with a great deal of formal complaisance, and then made some apologies, as many people do when they are dress'd as well as they can be, for being in such a dishabille, and not in the order she could wish to receive them.

It was easy for me to perceive, by Deidamia's countenance, how ill she had passed the night: Eutraccia also seemed in some agitation, though she dissembled it as well as she was able; and after giving some slight answer to Mrs. Flounceit's compliments, told her she had brought a friend to look over some of her fine things; on which the mantua-maker immediately open'd a large press, and brought out several pieces of chints, with some French brocades and rich Italian silks: these she spread upon a table, accompanying that action with many praises on the beauty and curiosity of each. But it was in vain she boasted, in vain she magnified; all she said, as well as the real merit of the goods she exhibited to sale, was wholly lost on Deidamia: the mind of that afflicted lady was too much bent on those things which she expected to be witness of, to have any eyes or ears for those which were now presented to her; she took up first one piece, and then another, but without seeming to know what she did; and had something so distracted in her airs and gestures, that Eutraccia was obliged to keep Mrs. Flounceit in discourse, to prevent her taking any notice of it. Her behaviour, joined with my knowledge of the cause, reminded me of Mr. Dryden's words, which, if she had been inclined to think of poetry, she

might pretty justly have apply'd to her own condition in this crisis :

Love, justice, nature, pity, and revenge,
Have kindled a wildfire in my breast ;
I am all a civil war within,
And like a vessel, struggling in a storm,
Require more hands than one to keep me upright.

But if she was so little able to support the bare idea of the shock she came on purpose to receive, what must she endure when suspense, and all the remains of hope, were swallowed up in the cruel certainty of her misfortune, and conviction left no farther room for doubt ! The maid of the house came into the room with a chocolate-pot in her hand, and told her mistress that the gentleman and lady above stairs gave their compliments, and desired the favour of her company to breakfast with them. Mrs. Flounceit was about to make some answer to this invitation, when Deidamia, not able to contain herself, flew out of the parlour, and directly up stairs, where she found Meroveus and a young woman sitting on the side of the bed they had but lately quitted.

Deidamia had scarce entered the chamber when she surprised the guilty pair with these words : ‘ I have a right, sir, to think my company ought to be as acceptable to Meroveus as that of Mrs. Flounceit, or any other woman.’

Eutraccia had followed Deidamia as fast as she could, in order, I suppose, to prevent any desperate effects of her present passion, and I was not far behind ; but it will be more easy for the reader to conceive the surprize which appeared in the looks of Meroveus than for me to express it : he started up, and with a voice which the various emotions of his mind rendered almost unintelligible, said to her,

Meroveus.

Meroveus. Confusion!—Deidamia!—madam, what brings you here?

Deidamia. That is a question which ought rather to be put to you. I came in pursuit of an ungrateful, too much beloved husband; you to indulge a lawless flame for an abandoned prostitute.

Meroveus. Madam,——madam, this does not become you.

Deidamia. Does it become you, sir, to leave your honest home and wife,——make pitiful excuses for your absence, and skulk in corners with a wretch like this,——this abject hireling of licentious wishes?

Mistress. Madam, I would not have you think I am any such person: I did not know *Meroveus* was a married man.

Deidamia. 'Tis false, vile creature! you could not know *Meroveus* without knowing he had a wife; a wife, who, without boasting, is every way his equal: but get out of my sight, that I may have liberty to ask my perjur'd husband what he could see in that face of yours to be preferr'd to mine.

On this, *Meroveus* was opening his mouth to speak, but was prevented by *Mrs. Flounceit*, who, being astonish'd on the lady's running up stairs, and by the noise she immediately heard above, had hobbled up as fast as her fat would give her leave, and came into the room that moment, crying as she enter'd,

Mrs. Flounceit. Bless me! what is the matter here?

Deidamia. Perhaps, madam, you are ignorant that your house is made a brothel.

Mrs. Flounceit. Oh, my stars!——a brothel!——Heaven forbid!

Eutracia. My friend tells you true, indeed: she is the lawful wife of that gentleman; they

have been married above seven years ; I was present at their wedding ; and that woman there is no better than a prostitute.

Mrs. Flounceit. Oh, the vile slut ! I wonder Sir David Townly should offer to bring me into this scrape ! he knows very well I never countenance such doings. Hussy, get out of my house this minute.

In speaking this, she advanced towards the mistress of Meroveus, and was about to push her out of the room ; but that gentleman, perceiving her intent, stepp'd between, and with a visage all inflam'd with wrath, said, ' Hold, madam, hold ;—this lady has put herself under my protection, and I will take care to defend her from all insults whatsoever.' Then turning to Deidamia went on thus :—' As for you, madam, you have only exposed me, and undone yourself : I will never see you more.' He then took his trembling mistress by the hand to lead her down stairs ; Deidamia, in the utmost agony of spirit, follow'd, and catching him by the arm, cry'd out to him,—' Oh stay, Meroveus !—you will not sure add injury to injury !—stay, I conjure you, and let that woman go !' To which he reply'd, ' Stand off, madam ;—your touch is now more hateful to me than ever it was agreeable ; so I leave you to repent the cause.'

This cruel rebuff not making her let go the hold she had taken of him, he threw her off with the greatest contempt, and in an instant was out of the house with his dissolute companion, who was, doubtless, as hasty as himself to get from a place where she could expect nothing but affronts. Deidamia would have pursued her ungenerous husband, perhaps even into the street, had she not been withheld by Eutracia, who endeavoured to convince

vince her how little it would avail to remonstrate any thing to him while he continued in this humour.

Rage had 'till now kept up the spirits of this unhappy lady; but the objects of it being removed, and the power of reflecting return'd, she sunk into a grief no less immoderate;—she wept, she wrung her hands, beat her lovely breast, she swooned several times, and in her intervals of sense could only cry out;—‘Cruel, barbarous Meroveus! — Unfaithful, ungenerous husband! — Good Heaven! for what unknown transgression am I become thus miserable!’ Neither Eutracia nor Mrs. Flounceit omitted any thing in their power which they thought might serve to give her consolation; but all they could do was insufficient, and it was some hours before she was enough recovered even to be carried home: as soon as she was, Eutracia went with her in the coach, and I walk'd home, touch'd to the very soul at the sight of her distress.

I have already given the reader my opinion concerning the extreme folly of revealing unwelcome secrets to our friends; so shall forbear adding any farther reflections on that head, and proceed, with as much brevity as the story will admit, to the catastrophe of this unhappy adventure.

I went the next morning to the house of Meroveus, and was convinced, by what I heard the servants say among themselves, that he had not been at home that night, which, indeed, I fear'd would be the case. On my going up stairs, I found Deidamia lying on a couch, in a very dejected, melancholy posture: Eutracia was sitting near her, that lady, it seems, having never quitted her since the unfortunate visit they made together at Mrs. Flounceit's; but as the discourse between

them consisted only of complaints on the one side, and persuasions to moderation on the other, I think it not material enough to be inserted. I had not been in the room above a quarter of an hour, before a servant presented a letter to Deidamia; it was from her husband, and contain'd these lines:

'MADAM,

'I AM determin'd to live easy; which I am certain is utterly impracticable for me to do with you, after what pass'd yesterday between us. What I then said in heat of passion, I now repeat in cool blood, and that, on the most mature deliberation. In short, an eternal disunion must be the consequence of your behaviour, nor should the tongues of angels dissuade me from this resolution; you will do well to bear it with patience, as the misfortune, if it may be one, has happen'd entirely through your own fault.

'To leave you no just reason to complain, I shall order the jointure, settled on you by our marriage-articles, to be regularly paid to you as though I were no more; and shall resign to you all the plate, linen, and household furniture, excepting only my books, the India chest, and bureau in my dressing-room.

'As to our children,—the boy I shall take under my care; the girl I leave to yours; and shall also add one hundred pounds per annum to the above-mentioned jointure, for her maintenance and education.

'Farewel for ever! As we no more must meet in love, it will be highly improper, and I think could not be very agreeable to either of us, to meet at all; I shall therefore refrain, as much as possible, going to any of those places you are accustomed to frequent, and hope you will have prudence enough to fix the same precaution in avoiding

‘ avoiding me, especially when I tell you, that it is
 ‘ the only thing in which you can now oblige

‘ Your ill-treated husband,

‘ **MEROVEUS.**’

‘ P. S. I shall send to-morrow for the things I
 ‘ mentioned.’

My fair readers will be the best judges of what Deidamia felt on finding her husband had taken a resolution which could not but give the most mortal stab both to her love and pride. She paus’d a little after having read it, then gave it to Eutracia, crying out at the same time with the greatest emphasis : ‘ See there, my dear Eutracia, this wedded husband is the sole aggressor, yet pretends to be the person who has reason to resent !’——That young lady, who was all fire and spirit, could not forbear loading Meroveus with reproaches at the end of every paragraph she read ; and when she had finish’d, said to Deidamia,

Eutracia. And how, my dear, do you intend to proceed with this base, this most injurious man ?

Deidamia. Indeed I know not.

Eutracia. If I were in your place, I would write him such an answer as would make his ears tingle.

Deidamia. Alas ! you know not what it is to be a wife !—but I will write, however.

She then rung her bell for the footman, and asked him whether the person who brought the letter waited for an answer.

Footman. No, madam ; he only bid me deliver it into your own hands, and told me my master order’d me to come to him about two hours hence : at George’s coffee-house, and bring some linen with me.

Deidamia. 'Tis very well ; but do not go 'till I have spoke to you again : I have a message to send by you.

The fellow assured her he would not fail to obey her commands, and withdrew ; after which she sat down to her escrutoire, took pen and paper, and began to write in the following terms :

' Cruel and unjust, yet still dear *MEROVEUS* !

' If there needed any other proof than that
' shameful one I yesterday was witness of, that I am
' miserable in the total loss of your affection, the
' letter I have just now received would be a con-
' vincing one. — What ! — after seven years con-
' jugal tenderness, perfect and sincere on my side,
' and well dissembled on yours, can you enter-
' tain a thought of parting ? — Of tearing a family
' to pieces, which has hitherto lived so respect-
' able in the world ? — Must I be doom'd to
' mourn a husband's loss even when that husband
' lives ? — Must my son be bred an alien to his
' mother, and my daughter a stranger to her fa-
' ther ? — O think, *Meroveus* ! and if no consi-
' deration of me has any weight, let that of your
' own reputation, and the interest of our children,
' prevail on you to alter this cruel resolution ! —
' We may, at least, live civilly together, if not
' with the same fondness as before this accident. —
' Yet why should we not ? — I am willing to meet
' you more than half way in love. — You cannot
' deny but you have wrong'd me in the most ten-
' der point : I confess I was too rash in the manner
' of detecting you : — We both have been to
' blame ; — what is done cannot be recall'd ; —
' but it may be repented of : — let us exchange
' forgiveness, and endeavour to forget what is
' past.

' There

‘ There was a time when every little ailment
 ‘ felt by your Deidamia gave equal pain to you !—
 ‘ Oh, can you then throw off at once all pity, all
 ‘ humanity, all remorse, for the agonies you cannot
 ‘ but be sensible my poor tormented heart now
 ‘ labours under ?—No,—’tis impossible ;—reason,
 ‘ honour, and good nature forbid it !—you will re-
 ‘ turn, accept the pardon I shall with joy bestow,
 ‘ and, in return, vouchsafe me yours.—Let not my
 ‘ hopes deceive me ;—I am sure they will not, if
 ‘ you will suffer yourself to reflect seriously on the
 ‘ unhappy consequences that must infallibly attend
 ‘ a separation from her, who ever has been, and
 ‘ desires to continue,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ Your most faithful, and

‘ Most affectionate wife,

‘ DEIDAMIA.”

This she communicated to Eutracia, who approved of the former part of it, but highly condemn’d the latter, as thinking it too submissive. Deidamia, however, was of a different opinion ; and the footman coming in soon after to know her commands, she seal’d it up, and put it into his hands to deliver to his master, bidding him say withal that she was very much indisposed.

After he was gone, the ladies began to enter into some dispute concerning the authority of a husband, and the duty that was expected from a wife ; but as I could promise myself no farther information by their discourse on this subject, and besides, remembering I had some business of my own to dispatch, I left the place that instant, not without an intention to return thither the next day. Accordingly I went in the morning, and found poor Dei-

damia almost drown'd in tears, and walking backwards and forwards in one of her rooms in a distracted posture: the cause of these fresh agonies I easily perceived by a letter which lay open on the table;—the contents whereof were as follow:

‘MADAM,

‘I HAVE been in some debate within my mind, whether to answer your epistle in the manner I now do, or not to answer it all, would be the most effectual means to prevent your giving me or yourself any future trouble; you find I have pursued the former of these methods, and hope you will have discretion enough not to involve me in a second dilemma on this score. Be assured, I did not resolve on a final separation without having well weigh'd the consequences attending it, and find them such as can no way come in competition with my peace of mind, without which life would be a curse, my bed a bed of thorns, my table a desert, my house a hell, and every friend that came to visit, a fury to torment me.

‘See the reverse your jealous folly has occasion'd; tax me not, therefore, with ingratitude: a thousand times you have confess'd you thought yourself as happy as a woman could be, and it is certain you were truly so. During the whole course of the years we lived together, you never had the least shadow of a cause to complain of my want either of respect or tenderness: if I indulged any pleasures, which I imagined would give you disquiet, I took care to be very private in them:—Why then did you suffer yourself to be led by an idle curiosity to pry into secrets, the discovery of which must give you pain, and possibly

‘ possibly prove the total destruction of that love
 ‘ which once you call’d your greatest blessing ?
 ‘ It is doubtless best for both of us, as you
 ‘ rightly enough observe, to forget what is past ;
 ‘ but I am far from thinking it can be done by the
 ‘ way you mean :—no, to forget can only be ac-
 ‘ complished by avoiding each other’s presence, and
 ‘ ceasing all kind of communication between us.
 ‘ I shall therefore give orders to my servant to
 ‘ charge himself with no letter or message you may
 ‘ think fit to send, and desire you will assure your-
 ‘ self, that this is the very last you ever shall re-
 ‘ ceive from me. Farewel ! I wish you all happi-
 ‘ ness in any other sphere of life than that you
 ‘ lately lived in with

‘ MEROVEUS.’

After having examined this epistle, I listened to what pass’d between Eutraccia and Deidamia ; but though I staid till my Tablets were crowded, I shall forbear inserting the particulars of these ladies discourse, for reasons which will be hereafter explained ; and only say in general, that Eutraccia would fain have spirited up her friend to resentment and disdain, against a husband whom she thought so unworthy of her ; that Deidamia’s love overcame her sex’s pride ; and, in fine, that the one argued like a virgin, and the other like an affectionate wife. Whether Deidamia made any further attempts to move her obdurate husband to a reconciliation, I cannot be positive ; but believe she did not, for she retired soon after into the country, whence she is but lately returned ; and whatever her heart may endure, has very much regained her usual composure of countenance and behaviour.

C H A P,

CHAP. VI.

Is somewhat more concise than ordinary, but to the Purpose; and will be found not the least worthy of any in the Book of being regarded with Attention.

AS during the course of these lucubrations I have been extremely circumstantial in the reports I have made, the reader has a right to be surprised that I omitted the discourse between Deidamia and Eutraccia; I shall therefore, according to my promise, relate my motive for so doing, and flatter myself it is such as will render me perfectly excusable in this point. Much about the time of the adventure related in the two preceding chapters, I happened to be witness of a conversation, which, though between different persons, and on a very different occasion, was still on the subject of marriage, the authority of a husband, and the submission expected from a wife; I left out the former, and made choice of the latter, as of the two the most interesting.

Two sisters, whose characters I present to the public under the names of Flavia and Celestina, have both of them a tolerable share of beauty, but no other qualification, either natural or acquired, that could entitle them to the hope of an elevated station; yet, by the benevolent aspect of their happy planets, are they become the brides of Alcandor and Thelamont, persons distinguished in the world by their birth and fortune, and still more so by the greatness of their merit. These nuptials, so astonishing to the town, and which happened soon after one another, gave me a curiosity to discover, by the help of my Invisibilty, in what fashion the ladies would behave themselves in a sphere

sphere of life so altogether new to them, and so little expected, even in their vainest wishes, ever to arrive at.

Flavia was the eldest, and it was to her I made my first visit; she was in her dressing-room, sitting at her toilet, with her waiting-maid behind her, giving the finishing stroke to her head-tire. Thelamont was also there, and stood leaning his elbow on a bureau, with a good deal of dissatisfaction in his countenance, while she kept looking in the glass, and without turning her head towards him, said,

Flavia. Prithee, Thelamont, let us talk no more of this stuff, I am quite sick of it; I am certainly the best judge of these things, and it is in vain to persuade me, for I will not be contradicted.

Thelamont. You will not then oblige me?

Flavia. Positively no; not when you intermeddle in these affairs.

Thelamont. Well then, madam, I shall say no more; but must tell you that I thought I had a right to expect this proof of your complaisance.

With these words he flung out of the room, and she said to herself,

Flavia. Pish! was there ever any thing so teasing! Men are mighty foolish sometimes. Katharine, bring me my gauze handkerchief.

Maid. Oh, ma'am, did not your ladyship say you would wear your new tippet to-day?

Flavia. Hah.—Yes,—no,—it would shew too much of my neck.

Maid. Oh, ma'am, your ladyship cannot shew too much of so beautiful a part.

Flavia. That's true; but I scratched one of my breasts with a pin this morning.

Maid. Oh the ugly pin!—I wish I knew which it was, that I might crook it quite double and throw it into the fire.

Just

Just as the maid had express'd her resentment against the weapon that had wounded her mistress, Celemena came into the room; and after saluting her sister with a freedom suitable to the nearness of their blood and friendship, said to her,

Celemena. What is the matter, my dear sister? you do not look pleas'd to-day.

Flavia. Umph.—No, not very well pleas'd; nor, indeed, much displeas'd.

Celemena. I met Thelamont going out as I came in; I thought he seem'd more reserved than usual, and in a very ill humour.

Flavia. If he chuses to be so, it would be a pity any one should attempt to put him out of it.

Celemena. I hope no misunderstanding has happened between you.

Flavia. No, no, we understand one another pretty well; I understand that he would fain pretend to take upon him the government of my actions, and he understands that I will not let him do it; so we have exchanged a few words this morning; that's all.

Celemena. Have a care, sister; quarrels in the beginning of marriage promise but little felicity in the continuance of that state.

Flavia. That's true; but 'tis very provoking when a man will needs interfere in things he has no manner of concern with.

Celemena. Pray what is the subject of your dispute, if it be not too great a secret?

Flavia. Why you must know he wants me to leave off putting any carmine upon my cheeks, calls it nasty daubing, and says I should be a thousand times handsomer without it.

Celemena. I can see nothing extraordinary in this; there are many men who have an utter aversion to a woman's using any art to her complexion.

Flavia.

Flavia. They may cry out against it; but yet I am sure it is frequently owing to art that they fall so much in love with us; a little red upon the cheeks gives a sparkle to the eyes, and a lustre to the features, which otherwise would appear flat and languid; but they are so foolish as not to consider this; they like us as they see us altogether; and though they may be sensible we are painted, never once imagine it is to that necessary auxiliary to beauty that we are chiefly indebted for those charms which attract their admiration.

Celemena. Suppose it as you say, which however I am far from allowing to be always the case. Thelamont has now seen you such as nature made you; the night wears off that borrow'd lustre, and the morning shews you what you truly are; and if he approves of you in this light, I know of no other person whom you need be studious to please.

Flavia. I am of a quite different opinion. Oh the joy of being gazed at, and followed by a whole crowded Mall!

Celemena. Perhaps to laugh; but if sincere, a very empty joy, and what a married woman ought not to be too ambitious of.

Flavia. So then you would have me comply with my husband's request?

Celemena. Indeed I would advise you to it: I am sure if Alcandor express'd a desire that I should cut off my hair, and never let it grow again, though it is the gift of nature, and bestow'd upon me as the greatest ornament of our sex, I would not hesitate one moment to oblige him.

Flavia. Then you are a fool.

Celemena. In this point I do not think I am: for besides that duty which the law exacts from every wife to her husband, there are other reasons which would oblige me to refuse nothing to Alcandor.

She

She accompany'd these words with a very significant look, which Flavia observing, ordered her maid, which had been all this time in the room, to withdraw; and, as soon as she was gone, replied to what her sister had said in these terms:

Flavia. I know not what you would say; you would infer, that because Alcandor and Thelamont married us without fortunes, we are therefore bound to be their slaves.

Celemena. Not so; and I dare believe that neither of them will ever require any submission from us, but such as, if we had always been their equals, would very well become us to grant.

Flavia. Laird! what a bustle you make about equals! Whatever we were before, marriage has made us now their equals; and for my own part, I shall never submit to do any thing Thelamont requires of me, unless my own inclination happens to concur.

Celemena. Oh, sister, I am amaz'd to hear you talk in this manner!—Have you been married but one month, and can already forget the unhappiness of our single state—our scanty and precarious dependance,—the difficulties we found to supply ourselves with even the common necessities of life! We made, indeed, a kind of tawdry shew when we appeared abroad; but how did we pinch for it at home? Is there no love, no gratitude due from us to men who have raised us to opulence, grandeur and respect?

Flavia. Pish! they married us to please themselves, not out of pity to us. But let us have no more of this dull stuff; you must go with me to Mrs. Rakelove's route to-night; it is the first she has had, and I promis'd her to bring all the company I could.

Celemena. Indeed you must excuse me.

Flavia. For what reason?

Celemena.

Celemena. Alcandor sups at home, and I cannot be abroad.

Flavia. Heavens ! how strangely silly you are grown ! Alcandor sups at home. What then, he did not marry you to make you a cook ! You do not dress his victuals ?

Celemena. No ; but he married me to make me a companion at his victuals ; and while he continues to desire my presence, as I flatter myself he always will, I shall never form any pretences to be absent.

The face of Flavia grew more red than the carmine had made it, on finding in her sister sentiments so opposite to her own ; but was prevented from making any answer by the entrance of a servant, who told her that some ladies were come to visit her ; on which she went, accompanied by *Celemena*, into the dining-room, in order to receive them. Thus ended the conversation I mentioned ; and by it the reader may judge which of these two sisters had the greatest share of prudence, best deserved her good fortune, and was most likely to enjoy a long continuance of it.



C H A P. VII.

Presents the Account of an Incident which cannot but be deeply affecting to the Youth of both Sexes ; and no less remarkable in its Event than any the Author's Invisibleness ever enabled him to discover.

AMONG all the various deceptions which are carried on in this great world, I know of none more cruel, and more liable to be attended with the worst of consequences, than those practised in the affairs of love ; yet it is a crime which
passes

passes with impunity, and is scarce censured by any but the persons injured by it, and their particular friends and confidants. Even the ladies, generally speaking, for there is no rule without exceptions, are so little the friends of each other, that we rarely find them taking up the quarrel of their sex in this point; on the contrary, they are apt to absolve the vow-breaker, and let the whole blame fall on the believer: a man who has triumph'd over the credulity of an hundred women, sees himself not less respected; and sometimes the number of past conquests shall serve him as a recommendation, and be a means of his attaining new ones. Perjury is deemed but a venal transgression in this case; few think that oaths and imprecations, when dictated by the heart of an amorous inclination, though formed in the most binding terms, and uttered in the most solemn manner, are ever registered in Heaven.

This vice, as I must take the liberty to call it, is not however wholly confined to the male sex; I am sorry to observe, that those of the other, either through pride, vanity, or an inconsistency of nature, are sometimes found guilty of deluding their lovers with fallacious expectations. I hope also to be forgiven by the more discreet part of womankind, when I say that a propensity to such a behaviour is yet less excusable in them than the men, as a perfect innocence, a sweetness of disposition, and a simplicity of manners, are, or ought to be, the distinguishing characteristics of the fair sex.

A young lady, to whom I shall give the name of Syrenia, was endowed by nature with every requisite to command love and admiration; she had fine eyes, a regular set of features, fine hair, and a most delicate complexion; was tall, well-shaped, and had somewhat peculiarly attractive in her air. Fortune had not been altogether so propitious to her;

her ; through the extravagancies of her parents she was left in possession of a very moderate fortune ; it was, however, entirely at her own disposal, and sufficient, with the good œconomy she was mistress of, to support her in a very genteel, though not a grand, way of life.

Proposals of marriage had often been made to her by several eminent and wealthy citizens ; but she rejected them all, and despised the thoughts not only of a shop, but also of all other callings and occupations whatever : ambition was the predominant passion of her soul ; and she had vanity enough to think that her birth, her person and accomplishments were such as might very well compensate for the smallness of her fortune, and entitle her to higher expectations.

She had lived 'till the age of twenty-three, without having any offer of the kind she hoped ; but about the expiration of that æra, a young gentleman, called Rossano, happening to see her at the house of a relation whom he visited, became violently in love with her, and soon after finding means to get himself introduced, made a declaration of his passion ; to which, knowing what and who he was, she gave all the encouragement he could wish, or that was befitting the character of a modest woman. It would, indeed, have been much to be wondered at, if the addresses of Rossano had not been acceptable to her ; he is descended from a very ancient and worthy family, has an estate of eight hundred pounds per annum, entirely free from any incumbrance, either mortgage, dowry, or portions to be paid out of it ; his person and behaviour are extremely agreeable ; and, to add to all this, he has deservedly the reputation of a man of strict honour, and more sobriety than could be expected from his years, and the dissoluteness of the present times.

The

The sincerity and warmth of his affection making him very strenuous in his pressures, and the advantages she found in a match with him rendering her complying, they were beginning to talk of ordering articles for their marriage to be drawn up, when an unexpected accident, relating to his estate, obliged him to go immediately into the country. Though he proposed to stay but a short time, yet he could not think of being deprived of the sight of his beloved Syrenia, even for a few weeks, without an infinity of grief. She testified little less regret for this enforced separation; their parting was extremely moving, each seemed to endeavour to outvie the other in expressions of tenderness; and the only consolation he had was, the repeated assurances she gave him, that wherever she went he carried her heart along with him.

It is highly probable, that the affection she profess'd for him was at that time perfectly sincere; and that she looked upon the accident which delay'd the celebration of their nuptials as no inconsiderable misfortune to her: but whatever chagrin she might feel at first on this account, it was very soon dissipated, and gave way to ideas of a far different nature. The motive which brought about so sudden and so extraordinary a change in her sentiments, I shall relate, as I was afterwards fully informed of it, by the several conversations I was present at by the help of my Invisibilty.

She was one morning in the Park with a lady of her acquaintance called Delia, where they were met and joined by a young officer, brother to Delia, and a gentleman who was with him, and equally a stranger to both the ladies, but behaved towards them with the greatest respect and politeness. They walk'd two or three turns up and down the Mall; after which the gentlemen took their leave, and Syrenia and Delia went to their respective

tive habitations, without thinking any more of what had pass'd. Little, indeed, could either of them apprehend the consequences of this adventure; but the next day, early in the forenoon, Syrenia was surpris'd with a visit from Delia, who came running into her apartment without any ceremony, crying out as she enter'd,

Delia. Joy to you, my dear; I come to wish you joy!

Syrenia. Of what? for I see no other subject of joy than what I always feel on seeing you.

Delia. Me!—no, no,—a thousand such as me are quite out of the question; but I have the pleasure to congratulate you on the greatest conquest your beauty ever made, or perhaps ever can make!

Syrenia. You are got into a vein of raillery this morning.

Delia. No, upon my honour, I never was more serious. Do you not remember the fine gentleman that was with my brother yesterday in the Mall?

Syrenia. Yes; you know they join'd company with us.

Delia. His name is Leontine; he is the eldest son of his father, and heir apparent to three thousand pounds a-year:—you saw his person; for my part, I think nothing can be more agreeable; and my brother tells me he is the most accomplished man he ever knew.

Syrenia. Well; and what is all this to me?

Delia. It is all to you. It seems he saw you last Sunday at Westminster-Abbey, fell violently in love with you, and would have followed to have seen where you lived, but was prevented by some gentlemen of his acquaintance, who that instant laid hold of him, and forced him along with them.

Syrenia. 'Tis possible such a one might be there; but I did not take notice of him.

Delia.

Delia. That may be; but he took so much of you, as not to be able to sleep ever since.

Syrenia. Very romantic, truly. But pray how came you so well acquainted with the secrets of his heart, who yesterday seemed an utter stranger to his person?

Delia. I will tell you the whole affair, as my brother last night came and informed me of it. After they had left us they went and dined together at a tavern: Leontine asked a thousand questions concerning your family, your fortune, and your character; all which, you may be sure, were answered not to your disadvantage: he then made my brother the confidant of the passion you had inspired him with, and intreated him to use his interest with me, as he found I was pretty intimate with you, to engage me to introduce him to you, which I have faithfully promised to do.

Syrenia. What! without my consent?

Delia. I hoped to be forgiven; such an offer, my dear, is not to be rejected.

Syrenia. It is much beyond my expectations, I must confess; but the disparity between our fortunes is too great.

Delia. If he thinks your person an equivalent, it is not your business to make objections.

Syrenia. That is true; and if I could flatter myself he were really sincere;—but I will consider on it.

Delia. It will be time enough for you to consider when you have heard what he has to say; for I have promised to bring you together this evening.

Syrenia. This evening!—as how?

Delia. As thus: I invite you to sup with me to-night, my brother and Leontine shall come in as if by accident; neither your pride nor your modesty has any thing to scruple; for I assure you I
will

will not let even my brother know that I have previously acquainted you with any thing of the matter.

Syrenia. Well, on that condition I will come.

Delia. Indeed, my dear, I should think you very much to blame to turn your back on a prospect so highly advantageous ; for though you are well born, well accomplish'd, are handsome, and have also some fortune of your own, yet the three first of these, as men now think of marriage, weigh but lightly against what they call the incumbrance of a wife ; and as to the latter, you know, it will not entitle you to a coach and six.

Syrenia. The justice of what you say cannot be denied ; but I would do nothing that should occasion my character being call'd in question, nor would seem too forward, though to promote the highest expectations ; therefore, my dear Delia, remember I depend on your prudence.

Delia. In this you safely may : I know too well what is owing to my sex, and the cruel aspersions men are apt to throw on our most innocent freedoms, not to be extremely cautious in avoiding giving the least room for censure.

Syrenia. Indeed, my dear, my observation on your own conduct ought to put to silence all my doubts on that score ; and whatever is the event of this affair, I shall always gratefully acknowledge your good wishes towards me.

Delia. If it succeeds, I shall be a sharer in your good fortune, as nothing gives me a more sensible satisfaction, than to have it in my power to contribute to the happiness of my friends : but I must leave you ; I promised to let my brother know whether you could come or not, that he may apprise Leontine of it.

The good-natur'd Delia, who did not know how far Syrenia had gone with Rossano, went away in

speaking these words ; but I could easily perceive, by the glow on Syrenia's cheeks, how much she was transported with the purpose of her visit ; and was yet more confirm'd of her being so by some disjointed soliloquies she utter'd when she thought there was no witness of what she said. ' Three thousand pounds a year, and so fine a gentleman as Leontine ! so handsome, so polite, so every thing that is agreeable ! If he is as sincere as Delia imagines him to be, I shall have cause to bless the hour I went to Westminster-Abbey ; or rather, that which carried me to the Park yesterday, without which he might never have known who I was, or where to find me, and I should have lost all the advantage my good stars seem'd to have decreed for me.'

Here she ceas'd to speak, other sort of emotions rising in her mind, to which she gave a loose in this exclamation : ' It was an unlucky thing I went so far with Rossano : the poor man loves me to distraction ; he will certainly break his heart when he finds I have forsaken him ; and, it may be, reproach me as the occasion of his death.'

On this her countenance seem'd a little disconcerted ; but it soon wore off, and after a short pause she went on thus : ' I am glad, however, that no contract has passed between us : the encouragement I gave his passion, and the verbal promises I made him, need be no impediment to my accepting a better offer. It will be prudence in me, however, not to throw him off, nor give him any room to suspect I have less affection for him than I had, 'till I am well assured that Leontine is in earnest.'

This was enough to shew me the principle and disposition of Syrenia, both which, indeed, were so little pleasing to me, that I had not patience to stay with her any longer ; but quitted her apartment

ment with a contempt, which could she have been sensible of, would no doubt have given her some mortification.

I made one of the company that night at Delia's, however; but as it could not be expected, that in a meeting which was to pass for casual, there should be any conversation, except on general topics, I reap'd no other benefit by being present, than to be convinced that Leontine, by the glances he took every opportunity of casting at Syrenia, was indeed very much enamour'd, and that she spared no pains to make him more so. The next day he went with the brother of Delia to visit her, and the succeeding one took the liberty of going thither alone, and made a declaration of his passion, which she, having well prepared herself with answers, receiv'd in such a manner as neither to reject, nor with too much readiness encourage.

The ice once broke, he prosecuted his addresses with so much vigour and assiduity, that she thought it would be no breach of modesty to give him room to hope he was not altogether indifferent to her: by degrees, therefore, she became more kind on every visit he made, but did it with caution and reserve; neither by her looks or words forfeiting that character of discretion she so much valued herself upon, dropping only some hints, as if forced from her, from a fund of tenderness within, which she would fain endeavour to conceal, but had not the power of doing it. Thus artful in appearing artless, Leontine, though a man of very good sense and penetration, never once suspected she was any other than such as she affected to be, plain, simple, generous, and incapable of disguising her sentiments.

It is certain, indeed, that her natural cunning was greatly assisted how to proceed on this occasion, by the intelligence she daily received from

Delia, to whose brother Leontine made no scruple of disburthening all that pass'd in his heart in relation to his passion for Syrenia. From this faithful friend she learn'd, that tho' it was not to be doubted but that Leontine was as much in love with her as man could be, yet the great respect and reverence he had for his father would not permit him to think of venturing on a thing of so much consequence as marriage, without having first obtained his consent and approbation of the woman he made choice of for a wife; and that to this end he had already sent two letters to his father, who lived entirely in the country; but the answers he received not being quite so satisfactory as he wish'd, he had wrote a third, dictated in the most passionate and pressing terms.

She could not avoid being under some very uneasy apprehensions on the score of this old gentleman, and also fear'd that the passion Leontine was inspir'd with might not of itself be strong enough to get the better of that obedience owing from him to a father's will; she therefore wish'd to interest his good nature and generosity in her favour, and judg'd that the surest way to secure his affection was to make him the confidant of her's. But the means of accomplishing this was a difficulty she knew not presently how to get over. To confess by word of mouth she lov'd him, seem'd too great a breach of modesty, especially as his courtship to her had not yet been of any long continuance; and to get him inform'd of it by Delia, she thought would be the same thing, as he would doubtless imagine it was not done without her privity and consent; besides, she knew not whether that lady would approve of such a step. Being one day desired by him to favour him with a tune on her spinnet, she entertain'd him with an air out of the Opera of Arsinoe, the first in the Italian taste ever exhibited

exhibited on the English stage, and, in my opinion, has been exceeded by none that have come after it. The words she sung to her instrument were these:

Wanton zephyrs softly blowing,
Watching, catching, whispering, going,
Bear in sighs my soul away :
Tell Ormondo what I feel,
Tell him how his chains I wear,
Tell him all my grief and care ;
Gently stealing,
And revealing,
More of love than I can say.

But though Leontine extoll'd both the music and the voice which gave it utterance, yet he shew'd no indication of imagining she had any design of flattering his passion in the choice she made of this song : this making her perceive she must be more explicit, her fertile invention soon presented her with a stratagem, which pleasing her fancy at the same time that it promis'd the success she aimed at, she put into immediate execution. It was this : Having a natural talent for poetry, she sat down at her escrutore, took pen, ink, and paper, and without being at the pains of much study, wrote the following lines :

The Breathings of a Love-sick Heart.

Wit, manly beauty, every grace combine
To deck the youth I love with charms divine.
But, ah ! my too uncautious heart take heed,
Nor with gay hopes the growing passion feed ;
Wealth's the chief idol that mankind adore,
The sov'reign power they all fall down before ;
My niggard fortune does that charm deny,
And love alone will not its wants supply ;
Let me then guard each av'nue to my breast,
And bar all entrance to this dangerous guest ;

Left by indulging the presumptuous flame,
 I fall the victim of despair and shame.
 But, oh, 'tis vain!—the god of love conspires
 To aid my Leontine with all his fires,
 Speaks in his voice and sparkles in his eyes,
 And what he sweetly forces, justifies.
 'Tis sure determin'd in the book of fate,
 I must adore, ev'n tho' he proves ungrate.

This paper, which she wanted him to believe was a sincere confession of the whole secret of her soul, she contrived should fall into his hands in such a manner as should have too much the appearance of chance to be liable to any suspicion of design. At his next visit, her maid being well instructed by her how to act, ran hastily into the room, and told her that the man whom she had ordered to come for his money was below. Syrenia affected not to understand what she meant, and cry'd,

Syrenia. What man? what money?

Maid. Mr. Shapley, madam, your stay-maker.

Syrenia. Oh, now I remember I did bid him come for his money; he takes a strange unseasonable time; people should always come in a morning on these affairs: however, I'll see if I can find his bill, and do you carry a pen and ink into the parlour, that he may write me a receipt on the back of it.

On this the maid withdrew, and Syrenia open'd a little desk that stood in the dining-room, and beginning to tumble over some writings she had there, as if in search of the pretended bill, dextrously slipp'd from among the rest the paper which contained the above-recited verses, and let it fall to the ground without seeming to observe that any thing was dropp'd; then saying she had found what she had

had look'd for, shut up the desk in a great hurry, begg'd Leontine would excuse her absence for a few moments, and went down stairs. She was no sooner gone than Leontine happening to cast his eyes that way saw the paper, and took it up, as I suppose, with no other intention than to deliver it to Syrenia when she should return; but it being purposely folded in such a manner that part of the writing appeared on the outside, he must have been strangely incurious indeed, if seeing it a poem, and wrote in his mistress's hand, he had forbore examining it. Never was any transport more visible than in the countenance of Leontine while reading these delusive stanzas: his looks put me in mind of the poet's words:

Kindness has resistless charms,
All things else but faintly warms;
It gilds the lover's servile chain,
And makes the slave grow pleas'd and vain.

Though by the particulars I have been repeating, the reader will easily suppose I was both an eye and an ear witness of them, yet it is utterly impossible for me to describe either the looks or attitude of the one or the other, in the joyous surprise of finding himself, as he imagined, thus extremely dear to the only woman to whom he wish'd to be so. She took care to stay so long below as to give him time to read over, more than once, what she intended for his perusal: it was still in his hands when she return'd; but she seem'd to take no notice of it, and was beginning to apologize for her absence, by laying the blame on the impertinence of her stay-maker; but Leontine, with a gesture full of rapture, interrupted her,—saying,

Leontine. O, madam, you must allow me to become an advocate for this honest tradesman,

since by his fortunate detaining you, I am made the happiest of mankind.

To this Syrenia, affecting not to comprehend the meaning of what he said, reply'd with a smile,

Syrenia. What riddle is this you are about to pose me with? I am the dullest creature in the world at giving a solution to these things.

Leontine. This paper, madam, w^{as}t^{ed} to me by the god of love's own hand, has given me the wish'd-for opportunity of proving myself less unworthy of the blessing I aspire to, than your doubts suggest. No, my charming Syrenia, not all the treasures in the world could add one ray of lustre to the graces of your mind and person; 'tis those alone I covet to enjoy, and in possessing them shall be more rich than in possessing both the Indies.

While he was speaking, Syrenia cast her eyes upon the paper and blush'd excessively; partly perhaps through shame, but more through the pleasure which diffus'd itself through all her veins, on perceiving, by the behaviour of Leontine, how well the success of her plot had answer'd the intention of it. The well-dissembled confusion she was in was an excuse for her not speaking; and Leontine went on to assure her, in the most tender terms, that no consideration whatever should have the power to oblige him to withdraw that firm affection he now avow'd to her, and that he hop'd a very little time would put a final period to all her apprehensions on that score. What farther conversation pass'd between them at this time I shall forbear to repeat, as it may be easily guess'd at; and proceed to the conduct of Syrenia in regard to her other lover, whom the reader may think I have too long neglected.

The business which call'd Rossano into the country detain'd him there much longer than he had expected; and an unlucky fall from his horse, the
very

very day before he intended to set out for London, occasioned a second delay of his journey. This absence of his gave Syrenia a full opportunity of entertaining her new lover, though she received every post a letter from the former, all which she did not fail to answer with that tenderness which might be expected from a woman who had promised to be his wife ; still keeping close to her first maxim, not to give any umbrage to the one, 'till she was perfectly secure of the other. All impediments, however, being at last removed, that gentleman arrived in town on the same day that Syrenia and Leontine were engaged in the manner above recited : his impatience to see his beloved mistress carried him immediately to her lodgings ; he came while his rival was with her ; but her maid, well knowing how improper it was that they should meet, told him her lady was abroad ; on which he went away, saying he would return in the evening, as he knew she was not accusom'd to stay late from home.

He was doubtless much disappointed, but not at all suspicious of the cause, 'till, having cross'd the street, he happen'd to cast his eyes back upon the house, either by chance, or possibly through fondness of the place which contain'd the idol of his wishes.—Syrenia was sitting in the window, and Leontine very near to her : Rossano had a full view of both ; but Syrenia was too earnest in discourse to observe him, though he stood motionless on the spot where he was for some minutes. It seem'd not strange to him that a gentleman should be with her ; tho' he could find no way to account why he should be denied access to her, but one, which stung him to the soul. He was more than once tempted by his jealousy, as I afterwards discover'd, to return and demand of the maid a reason for his having been refused admittance ; but second thoughts prevail'd,

and he went home to deliberate how it would best become him to behave in such a circumstance.

Leontine staid supper; and Syrenia stepping out of the room to give some necessary orders to her maid, was inform'd by her that Rossano had been there, and of the message he had left: this greatly disconcerted her; but after a little pause, she recovered herself enough to give these directions:—
 ‘ This is very unlucky; Leontine will probably stay late: you must therefore tell Rossano that I am not yet come home, and that you believe I am gone to the play.’ The maid punctually obeying these directions, Rossano only reply'd, that since it happen'd so, he would do himself the honour to breakfast with her lady the next morning, and then departed, seemingly well satisfied. But though he forbore giving any indications of his jealousy to this girl, he doubted not but that the second repulse was owing to the same motive the first had been: resolving, however, to be more fully convinced, he posted his servant, whom he had brought with him for that purpose, under a lamp a few doors from the house where Syrenia lodged, charging him to observe carefully who came in or out, and if he saw a gentleman in black velvet and a bag wig, to follow him wherever he went, find out his name if possible, and bring him an exact account.

Leontine was so much charm'd with the discovery he had made of Syrenia's affection, that he quitted her apartment not 'till the night was far advanced. Rossano's servant, however, kept close to his stand, 'till a chair being call'd, he saw the gentleman his master had described go into it: he followed, and as soon as Leontine had enter'd the house where he lodged, and the door was shut, ask'd the chairmen if they knew the gentleman they had carried; but they answering in the negative,
 and

and he seeing no house open where he might enquire, could learn nothing farther that night; but early the next morning he went again, and had the address to find out all the particulars that could be expected from him.

Rossano was now assured not only that he had a rival, but also a rival highly favour'd by his mistress. The distraction he was in may easily be conceived; but he dissimulated it on his first approach to Syrenia, whom he did not fail to visit the next morning, as he had told her maid. Syrenia, before she was inform'd of it, knew very well, that missing her that night, he would not let another day pass over without coming; she therefore had the artifice to tell Leontine she was obliged to go some few miles out of town to see a relation who she heard was dangerously ill.

I am not a person who live without having some business in the world, yet there are few things of consequence enough to me to have detain'd me from being a witness of what pass'd in this interview between Rossano and Syrenia; so I shall present my readers with it as recorded in my faithful Tablets. Syrenia no sooner heard he was there, than she ran to the top of the stair-case to receive him, and with the greatest shew of tenderness saluted him in these terms:

Syrenia. My dear Rossano, how grieved have I been for losing the sight of you last night, after having been so long an age of time deprived of it!

Rossano. This misfortune, madam, was wholly mine; for while I moan'd your absence, you doubtless found something to amuse and entertain you. I heard you were at the play.

Syrenia. I was so; but what could I find there to compensate for the satisfaction I miss'd by being so unlucky from home?

Rossano. Were you at Covent-Garden?

Syrenia. No ; at Drury-Lane. But why do you ask ?

Rossano. Only for a foolish fancy.

Syrenia. Nay, I may answer myself that question. I will lay my life you went in search of me ; but I chose to go in a disshabille, and sat on the back bench in Burton's box, so it was impossible for you to see me.

Rossano. Not so impossible as you imagine, madam : but I had no need to go to either of the Theatres ; the object I so much languished to behold presented itself to me without my taking any pains.

These words occasion'd a visible change in her countenance ; she blush'd excessively, cast her eyes upon the ground, and had not power to lift them up while she said only,

Syrenia. What is it you mean ?

Rossano. There needs no explanation ; the disorder you in vain endeavour to conceal, shews but too much how well you are acquainted with my meaning. Ah, Syrenia, Syrenia, how did I once flatter myself with an assurance that your heart was mine, inviolably mine ! but now I find my absence has been fatal to me.

Syrenia. Forbear to talk thus : these suspicions are unjust to me, and cruel to yourself.

Rossano. Why then was I last night turn'd from your door ? Why twice repulsed, while my more happy rival was allow'd the privilege of entertaining you till midnight ?

Syrenia. Who tells you this ?

Rossano. My own eyes, madam, were my first intelligencers : I saw you at that window ; saw also your new favourite, and easily judged by both your attitudes what was the subject of your conversation : as to the rest, I was informed of it by means to which I afterwards had recourse.

The

The false Syrenia was now absolutely confounded : there was no giving the lye to ocular demonstration as to the first part of Rossano's charge against her ; but she endeavoured to avoid the latter, by saying,

Syrenia. Well, Sir, I own I was at home, and had order'd myself to be denied ; but expected not your coming, or knew you had been here 'till after you were gone : as for the gentleman you saw with me, 'tis your own jealous fancy alone that makes you regard him in the light of a lover.

Rossano. I grant you did not expect me ; but as your servant is no stranger to the footing we are upon, she would certainly have look'd on me as an exception to the general order you had given, if she had not known I was no proper person to join in the company you had above : besides, you cannot plead ignorance of my second visit ; yet I was again turn'd back.

Syrenia. You wrong me ; I protest I never heard of your being here 'till I was going to bed ; think no more therefore of such idle stuff : this is not discourse for two people who love, and have so long been absent from each other.

Rossano. Ah, Syrenia ! I wish the treatment I have received would allow me to entertain you with any other : there was a time when I could be as gay, perhaps, as he who now supplants me in your esteem.

Syrenia. Still harping on the same string ; remember what the poet says :

No signs of love in jealous men remain,
But that which sick men have of life,—their pain.

She had just done repeating these lines when the tea-equipage was brought in for breakfast, and Rossano, who I could perceive by his countenance was little pleased with the trifling answers she had
made

made to his reproaches, rose up to take his leave; on which she suddenly catch'd hold of his hand, and with a well-counterfeited tenderness in her voice and eyes said to him,

Syrenia. You will not go and leave me in this humour?

Rossano. Indeed I must; I have this moment thought of a business that requires immediate dispatch.

Syrenia. Shall I then see you in the afternoon?

Rossano. I cannot promise.

He was half way down stairs while speaking these last words; and though she follow'd him two or three steps, and call'd him to stay, he turn'd not, nor even look'd back upon her, but went hastily out of the house. I was resolv'd to see what was his intent, and accompanied him to the place of that kinswoman where he had first seen Syrenia. He was beginning to tell her what cause of complaint he had against that lady; but she stopp'd his mouth by saying she was already acquainted with every thing he had to relate; and then proceeded to inform him, that having a friend who lived opposite to Syrenia, she had learn'd that she entertain'd a new lover, who visited her almost every day, and that the neighbourhood believed it would very shortly be a match. Rossano went from this relation to his own lodgings, where having vented some part of his rage in exclamations on the levity and ingratitude of womankind, he sat down and wrote the following lines to Leontine:

‘ S I R,

‘ You have endeavour'd to supplant me in
 ‘ the affection of the woman I loved, and am en-
 ‘ gaged to marry: I need not tell you I mean Sy-
 ‘ renia; I expect therefore you will either resign
 ‘ all pretensions to her under your own hand, or
 ‘ give

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‘ give such satisfaction as one gentleman has a right
 ‘ to demand from another in these cases : I shall
 ‘ attend you behind Montague-house at eight to-
 ‘ morrow morning, ’till when,

‘ Yours,

‘ ROSSANO.’

This he sent immediately to Leontine, who hap-
 pening to be at home, returned an answer by the
 bearer in these terms :

‘ S I R,

‘ I OWN myself a lover of Syrenia, but know
 ‘ nothing of your courtship to her, nor will believe
 ‘ she is under any engagement of the nature you
 ‘ mention, either to you or any other man ; and
 ‘ shall be so far from resigning my pretensions, that
 ‘ I will defend them to the last moment of my
 ‘ life : you may therefore rely on my meeting you
 ‘ at the time and place appointed.

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ LEONTINE.’

Rossano had scarce finished reading this billet,
 when a porter brought him a letter from Syrenia,
 the contents whereof were these :

‘ My very dear ROSSANO,

‘ YOUR behaviour this morning has thrown
 ‘ me into disquiets which might excite compassion
 ‘ in a heart less devoted to me than I flattered my-
 ‘ self yours was : I thought the love between us
 ‘ was established on a more solid basis than to be
 ‘ shook by every puff of jealous caprice ; I doubt
 ‘ not but to convince you that yours is no other.
 ‘ If this is so lucky as to find you at home, or
 ‘ you receive it time enough, I beg to see you this
 ‘ evening ;

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• evening ; for I cannot bear you should pass another night in such cruel suspicions of

• Your faithfully affectionate

‘ SYRENIA.’

I perceived he was in some dilemma on reading this billet ; he paus’d a while, then said, ‘ My compliments to the lady, and—then paus’d again, at last cry’d, ‘ Tell her I am engag’d this day, but will wait upon her to-morrow.’

Various reflections seemed now rolling in the mind of this much-abus’d lover ; but I left him in them, and contented myself with going the next morning to the field of battle, in order to see how the combatants would behave :—they were both so punctual to the time, that it is hard to say which of them was first within the lists. *Rossano*, however, having some idea of *Leontine*, as he had seen him through *Syrenia*’s window, advanced towards him, and said,

Rossano. I guess, Sir, you are the gentleman I invited hither.

Leontine. You are not deceived, Sir, if your name be *Rossano*.

Rossano. The same, Sir.

Leontine. Mine then is *Leontine* ; and you find me ready to maintain my pretensions to the fair *Syrenia*.

Rossano. And I to assert that right which a long series of encouraged courtship and mutual vows has given me.

Leontine. This then is the way we must dispute the prize.

Both their swords were already drawn ; and *Rossano*, either through superior skill or better fortune, gave his antagonist a slight wound in the side on the first pass, and on the second a much deeper

deeper on the right arm, which occasioning a great effusion of blood, he was obliged to drop his sword ; on which the other, imagining the mischief to be greater than it really prov'd, stepp'd hastily towards him with these words : ' Sir, though I might expect the justice of my cause would give me some advantage over you, I should be extremely sorry to find it attended with any bad effects ; I beg therefore, as there are scarce any chairs abroad so early, you will give me leave to support you to my lodgings, which are very near, and where you may have immediate assistance.'

Leontine accepted the offer, a surgeon was immediately called, and his cloaths stripp'd off in order to have his wounds examined : that on his side was not at all deep, and that on his arm happening not to be near any tendon, required little more than a tight bandage for its cure : he was advised, however, to drink some mull'd wine, and then endeavour to compose himself to sleep for a few hours. Rossano, with a great deal of humanity and politeness, took care to see this injunction performed, and on Leontine's requesting it, sent to his lodgings for fresh cloaths and linen for him to put on when he should awake.

As Rossano was retiring to leave his guest to that repose which was thought needful for him, he saw a paper lying on the floor, which he took up, not knowing but it was something belonging to himself ; but how great was his amazement when he found what it contain'd ! this being the very verses Syrenia had wrote on Leontine, and had fortuitously been hook out of that gentleman's pocket as his cloaths were hastily thrown to the other side of the room. 'Till now, the love he had bore Syrenia kept him from entertaining any worse opinion of her conduct, than that it was the vanity incident to her sex, which alone had made her encourage the

the addresses of Leontine; but this plain proof of her inconstancy gave a sudden turn to his sentiments, and changed at once all the tenderness he ever had for her into contempt and hatred. Leontine had also some uneasy thoughts on the score of Syrenia. Rossano seem'd to him to be a man of too much honour to assert a falsehood, and began to fear that himself had been deceived in his opinion of that lady's sincerity. Being less inclined to sleep than to be satisfied in this point, he rung a bell which hung by the bedside, on which Rossano, who was no farther than the next room, went in and asked how he did;—to which he reply'd,

Leontine. So well that I think I need lie here no longer than 'till my man brings me some clean apparel, that I may rise with decency; in the mean time, sir, I should take it as a favour you would let me know how far I have been guilty of injustice to you in regard of Syrenia. In your billet to me, you mention an engagement; if it be so, I was perfectly ignorant of it, and at that time imagined I had strong reasons for disbelieving; otherwise I do assure you, sir, not all my passion for that lady should have made me attempt to disunite your loves.

Rossano. Though it may seem ungenerous to boast a lady's favours, as I have no other way to justify my rash proceeding towards you, be pleased to read that letter.

In speaking this he presented to Leontine the letter he had received from Syrenia the day before, which that gentleman had no sooner looked over, than he cry'd out with the greatest surprise,

Leontine. Good heaven! Why this was dated but yesterday!

Rossano. Yes, sir, and wrote on account of my testifying some jealousy on your being with her the evening before; but I have now done with that
idle

idle passion, and can now resign my claim with as much calmness as I would lately have maintained it with eagerness.

Leontine. Is it possible you can be in earnest?

Rossina. Were Syrenia more beautiful than she is, the enjoyment of her person without her heart, could give me no happiness; and had this paper, which accidentally fell from your pocket in the hurry this morning, been put sooner into my hands, I should not have proceeded as I have done.

In speaking this he gave Leontine the paper he had taken up; the other immediately saw what it was, and receiving it with a smile, made this reply: 'I thank you, sir; but I assure you I am not at all vain of these verses, as they serve only to prove that the lady was willing to be double arm'd, and in case one lover should fail, to be provided with another.'

After this they began to enter into a very free discussion on the conduct of Syrenia towards them both; and there now appeared so much deceit, mean artifice, ingratitude, and perfidy, as well to the one as the other, that it is hard to say which of them entertain'd the most despicable notions of her: in fine, they agreed to resent the impositions she had practised on them in such a manner, as some of my fair readers, how greatly soever they may condemn Syrenia, will not, perhaps, easily absolve them for.

The servant of Leontine being arrived with the things his master had ordered to be brought, that gentleman rose and got himself dress'd, and Rossina in the mean time employed himself in gathering up all the letters he had received from Syrenia, and made them up in a large packet, and wrote on the cover,

'Amorous billets from a lady, of a very extraordinary character.'

They

They went in two chairs to the house where Syrenia lodged, and the door being opened, rushed up stairs without any ceremony, and even into the dining-room where she was sitting. Leontine was the first that entered ; she rose to receive him, but seeing his arm in a scarf, cry'd out,

Syrenia. Oh, sir, what accident has befallen you ?

Leontine. No unlucky one, madam ; I have, indeed, received two slight wounds on your account, but I bless the hand that gave them, since they have been the means of curing one of a more dangerous nature in my heart.

She had no time to ask what he meant by these words ; Rossano was now in the room, and rejoined to what the other had said in this manner :

Rossano. My heart is also in a pretty good condition too ; for though I have lost a mistress, I have gained a friend, from whom I have reason to hope more sincerity. You see, madam, two persons together, whom doubtless you wished to keep separate, while we had separate interests ; but we have now agreed, and as we lately joined to persecute you with our addresses, now join in the resolution of troubling you no more.

Leontine. I have nothing to add, madam, to what my friend has delivered, but to restore this paper, which can be of no use to me, and may be of some to you, as change but the name, the picture may suit some happier man.

Rossano. And I return those letters you have from time to time favoured me with.

He then laid down the packet, at the same time Leontine did the verses upon a table. Syrenia was all this while immovable as a statue ; she had found from their first entrance that they had compared notes, that she was exposed, her arts laid open, and her hopes irrecoverably lost
with

with both : fain ſhe would have ſpoke, but had no power ; and all ſhe could utter at laſt was,

Syrenia. Mighty well ;—ſo then I am to be inſulted !

Roffano. No, madam, your birth and beauty are your protection ; and had your mind been equal to either, neither of us, I believe, would have broke his chain, or even wiſh'd to regain that liberty we now have ſo much cauſe to triumph in.

Leontine. Come, ſir, you ſee the lady is diſconcerted ; let us leave her to meditate on this adventure ; it may be of ſervice in ſome future one.

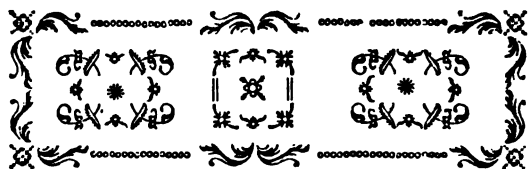
Roffano. With all my heart. A good huſband to you, madam.

Leontine. I join in the ſame wiſh. Your ſervant, madam.

They departed with theſe words, and I ſtaid not long after them ; the ſight of Syrenia's deſpair, how juſtly ſoever ſhe had brought it on herſelf, giving more pain than ſatisfaction.

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

THE




THE INVISIBLE SPY.

B O O K VIII.



C H A P. I.

Contains a very brief Detail of such Occurrences as presented themselves to the Author's Observation in an Evening's Invisible Ramble through several Parts of this Metropolis.

 T has often been a matter of very great concern to me, and I believe must be the same to every thinking mind, to see how some people are continually hurried and busied about mere trifles, of no manner of consequence to themselves, or scarce to any body else; while all the duties of religion, all the regard for the welfare of their most particular friends, all love of their country, and even the dearest interests of their own families, are totally neglected. What judgment can we form of a person of this cast, but that he has a vacuum in his head ready to be filled up with the first toy that presents itself, and not being endowed with a strength of reason sufficient to direct his choice, suffers

suffers himself to be engross'd by such things as he finds make most noise in the world, not such as have most relation to his own affairs, either as to fortune or reputation.

Can there be a sight more farcical than for a man, who, without any petition to prefer, or suit to solicit; in short, without any call or business whatsoever, is continually cringing at the levee of a minister of state, and when the compliments are paid, and the circle is dismiss'd, runs through the whole round of his acquaintance, reporting where he has been, and what he has seen, sagaciously remarking on every nod, wink, or smile of the great man, and finding mystery even in the tie of his wig, or the loose or straight buttoning of his coat?

Another, whose affairs at home, perhaps, are involved in the utmost perplexities, shall pass the best part of his time among the Jobbers in 'Change-Alley, go from coffee-house to coffee-house, enquire of every broker he meets with the price of stocks, in which he has no share, or money to purchase any, and be more solicitous in finding out the uses to which the Sinking-Fund is appropriated, than for the means of extricating himself out of his present difficulties.

A third values himself much upon being a great connoisseur in politics, registers all the public papers from year to year, pretends to reconcile all the contradictions they contain, and to discover some latent meaning in every paragraph, and takes more pains to unriddle their imaginary enigmas than a poor servitor at the University does to translate Perseus for a rich student who pays, and fathers the labour of his brain.

Others have a taste for building, are extremely curious in ornamenting the structures they cause to be erected with carvings, paintings, and such-like

like superficial beauties ; but never once examine how the foundation is laid, or whether the pompous outworks may not be liable to sink very soon into a heap of rubbish. Some employ their whole cares on the breeding and well managing their horses, hounds, and game-cocks, leaving the education of their sons entirely unregarded.

Impossible is it to enumerate the various trifles with which too many, even among the highest class of life, suffer themselves not only to be amused, but wholly taken up ; but I think, without any danger of being accused of too much severity, one may justly say, with Shakefpear, of such men, that

The earth has bubbles as the water hath,
And these are some of them.

In a word, — MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING — is a play so universally acted in this town, that one can go to very few places without being witness of some scenes of it. As insignificant, however, as these people may seem by the description I have given of them, and as in effect they really are, they are yet of more consequence to the public than is generally believed, or than they themselves, with all the stock of vanity they are usually possessed of, are capable of imagining: this, though it may be thought a paradox, will be easy for me to make appear, as thus:—These unjudging creatures, for I have already proved them to be such, are frequently made the tools by which evil and designing men fashion out their ends. When those in power have any thing on foot, from which they find it necessary to divert the attention of the nation, it is but throwing out some whisper, though of ever so absurd and ridiculous a nature, among the people I am speaking of, and they will immediately ring it in
the

the ears of the populace 'till it becomes the cry, and every argument that truth and reason can alledge is deafened with the noise.

An experience of many years, joined with a diligent observation of the world, has convinced me, beyond all doubt, that these inconsiderates, without being sensible of the mischief they do, have been, and daily are, the instruments of propagating the most infamous scandals, gross falsties, and base aspersions on the great and good; as also the most ridiculous and idle stories, invented and calculated by men of more thinking heads, to amuse and divert the attention of the public from what most demands its regard. A glaring instance of this latter kind now takes up the town, all mouths are full of it, all ears open to it; but it appears to me that there are few eyes clear enough to discern the secret ground-work of this mountain of absurdities, and on what motive it was erected. I think it is not my province, however; nor shall I presume to inform the judgment of any one in this point; but shall only relate a passage I happen'd to be witness of, which every one is at liberty to descant upon as he shall think proper.

Being one day on the other side of the Royal-Exchange, when some business I had there being dispatch'd sooner than I expected, it came into my head to call in at a certain celebrated coffee-house, which I had been told was frequented by a great number of the most eminent and wealthy citizens; but as I had no acquaintance with them, and some other more substantial reasons for not appearing in propria personâ, I chose to go in my Invisible capacity. Pursuant to this resolution I stepped into the first obscure alley I could find, and there girded on my precious Belt, which, as well as my Tablets, I seldom went out without taking with me, and then hasted to the place I mentioned.

I found the room very full of company, most of whom were of that sect of dissenters from the establish'd church which are under the denomination of Presbyterians: I would not here be understood to mean any thing in ridicule of those gentlemen, for I love and revere every man of real virtue and good sense, be he of what persuasion soever. How far the persons I have just now occasion to speak of answer to either of these characters I will not pretend to say; let their own words testify: I shall, according to the phrase of the inspired writer, set a guard upon my mouth, that I offend not with my lips. But to proceed.

Three or four, who I afterwards perceived were leading men among them, were engaged in a very warm dispute with a gentleman, who endeavour'd, with a great deal of spirit, to expose the gross absurdities and falshood of a cause they took upon them to maintain, and with a kind of magisterial air attempted to enforce the belief of in others. The odds appear'd to me at first, I confess, to be a little ungenerous: but I was the more strengthen'd in this opinion, when I heard the manner in which they delivered their arguments, and that were urg'd in favour of one of the most preposterous and ridiculous complaints that ever engaged the attention of any men of common sense. After saying this, I think it is needless to add, it was the affair of Squires and Canning. As I am utterly unacquainted with the names either of those who defended the cause of the latter, or of him who treated it with contempt, I shall distinguish the one by that of Assertors, and the other by that of Opponent. The conversation which pass'd on both sides, after I had got a convenient place to post myself, and had spread my Tablets, I shall give the public a faithful transcript of, as taken from those unerring testimonies, and was as the reader will find hereafter written.

First

First Asserter. I am surpris'd, Sir, you should rack your brain for arguments against the cause of helpless innocence and virtue in distress.

Second Asserter. 'Tis barbarous, 'tis cruel. Where shall we find an object of compassion if Betty Canning is not one? We know her, Sir.

Third Asserter. Ay, she is of our congregation; has always been a diligent frequenter of the Meeting-house, and fervent in her devotions.

Opponent. So because she is of your congregation, it naturally follows she must be chaste; the lambs of your flock never go astray; but I forbear to make any reflection on this score, and shall only say, I never shall give credit to a story so full of inconsistencies and improbabilities as this which has been forged by her and her accomplices.

First Asserter. Sir, there is no reasoning against facts: she has sworn to the truth of it before a magistrate, and that magistrate has testified his belief of it.

Opponent. Yes, the story she told was romantic; it suited his taste; he thought it might be a proper subject to work up into a Farce or Puppet-show, so was willing to promote the credibility of it.

First Asserter. Mere spite and scandal.

Opponent. Not at all; and I doubt not but the imposition will be fully laid open by another magistrate, superior in every degree to him who takes her part.

First Asserter. Sir, it is prophane and impious in him, or you, or any man, to espouse the cause of a wicked old hag, a vagabond, a gipsy, such as Mary Squires; and a known instrument of libidinous pleasures, such as mother Wells.

Opponent. Gentlemen, I have nothing to allege in defence of these creatures; but that however guilty they may have been, or continue to be,

in other respects, they are entirely innocent in this they are accused of.

First Affertor. No, no, 'tis impossible.

Opponent. Saying a thing does not prove it to be so; but give me leave only to offer a few queries, in relation to some of the many inconsistencies in the tale told by that idle wench, Betty Canning.

Second Affertor. Do so; we shall know how to answer them.

Opponent. First then, supposing her to have been robbed in the manner she pretends by two ruffians, what could induce fellows who live upon the spoil, after having taken from her all they found worth taking, to quit the pursuit of other booty, and lose their time in dragging her into the country, only to throw her into the house, and then leave her there; for she does not accuse them of making any attempt upon her chastity?

First Affertor. As to that, it is highly probable they might be see'd by mother Wells to bring the first young woman they could meet with to her house, in order to be made a sacrifice to her mercenary views, and the lust of some vile fellow.

Opponent. Then they would certainly have chose an object of a more tempting aspect, or would have deserved little for their pains; but let that pass. If it were as you imagine, would any woman, who it is said has long been in practice in the seducing trade, have behaved towards the prey brought into her clutches in the manner she did to Betty Canning? Would she not rather have sooth'd the frightened maid, reviv'd her drooping spirits with good eating and drinking, promis'd her fine cloaths, and then introduced some man to her, who might have allur'd her to the sin she aim'd to make her guilty of? Surely the way to tempt her to be a prostitute was not to lock her up alone in a wild
desolate

desolate room, without a bed to lie upon, or any other refreshment than a little bread and water; such usage, one must think, was intended to mortify, not excite a carnal inclination.

First Asserter. Sir, I am grieved, greatly grieved in spirit, to find you so ignorant of the force of virtue; I tell you, Sir, that the courage and resolution of this virgin struck such an awe into the minds of those profligate wretches she was placed among, that they had not the power of putting their wicked designs in execution: Heaven, indeed, for a trial of her patience, permitted them to distress her helpless innocence, but not to destroy it.

Opponent. Very extraordinary, truly! But pray, Sir, why did this suffering saint remain so long under the roof of such abandoned creatures, since all accounts agree that in three days, nay in three hours after her confinement, she had the same opportunity of making her escape as at the time she pretends to have effected it?

Second Asserter. Her eyes were not open to the means of her deliverance 'till that blessed moment; it was ordained she should undergo the persecution she did, in order to make her virtue more triumphant over sin and shame.

Opponent. Oh, gentlemen, these arguments will never be swallowed any where but in a conventicle.

Third Asserter. Sir, they will always have their due weight with every one but a reprobate.

Opponent. How, Sir!

The Opponent was so much incens'd at these words, that he started from his seat, and was about to reply with his fist; but some of the more moderate part of the company interposed, and prevented the mischief that might otherwise have ensued. By their persuasions he sat down again, and

the dispute would doubtless have been renew'd, it may be with greater vehemence than before; if a drawer from a neighbouring tavern had not luckily come and told him that two gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, desired to speak with him; on which he went away, perhaps to the great satisfaction of the assertors of Betty Canning's cause, who, if he had staid and continued his queries, might probably have been a little puzzled to find answers to them.

During the debate I have been repeating, every one in the room kept a profound silence; but afterwards the conversation became general; several other subjects were started by particular persons, but they were not listen'd to; the majority seemed to have their heads so full of Betty Canning, that they could scarce think or speak of any thing beside. 'Tis true, indeed, they did not all give credit to her story; yet the positiveness with which they heard it affirmed, made the least credulous divided in their thoughts, and afraid to pass a judgment either on the one or the other side of the question. The reader will doubtless naturally suppose that it was impossible for me to live in the world, and have any acquaintance in it, without having heard, long before I came to this place, much talk of Elizabeth Canning, her pitiful distress, her miraculous preservation and escape, and all the other prodigies of that amazing story.

'Tis true, indeed, I was a stranger to no part of it; but then my conversation being chiefly among the gay part of the town, I was not much surpris'd that people who can find very little to employ their thoughts, should be fond of a tale which had so much of the marvellous in it; as children, before they arrive at years capable of being instructed in more solid matters, listen with pleasure to their nurses stories of giants, fairies, and

and enchanted castles; as such I regarded all they said, and thought no farther of it. But when I heard grave citizens, men of business, of a sedate deportment and good understanding in other things, argue with serious countenances on such a heap of wild absurdities, I cannot say whether my astonishment or indignation had most dominion over my faculties; but this I know, that both together destroyed all the little stock of patience I was master of, and would not suffer me to stay any longer to listen to those insignificant debates which I found were likely to continue among this company.



CHAP. II.

Relates some farther Incidents of a pretty particular Nature, which fell under the Author's Observation in the same Evening's Invisible Progression.

THOSE turbulent emotions which the scene I had just come from being witness of had rais'd in me, being somewhat quieted by air and walking, I had the curiosity to call in at another great coffee-house, hoping I should find there something to give a turn to the present disposition of my mind. But I found that the remains of my ill-humour were not to be so soon dissipated as I had imagin'd. Here was indeed a vast deal of company; clerks in public offices, lawyers, physicians, tradesmen, and some few divines, composed the promiscuous assembly; but all were engaged on the same dirty draggle-tail subject, as one of our news-writers justly terms it; the names of Betty Canning, the Gipsy, and mother Wells, resounded from each quarter of the crowded room,

and the cause then depending between these creatures made the whole conversation at every table.

Here I would not be at the trouble of opening my Tablets, easily perceiving that nothing worthy of being recorded in them, or of communicating to the public, was likely to ensue; and also that the smallest part of time I should waste in this company, would be paying too dear for any discourses I should hear from them. Accordingly I left the house after having staid there about seven minutes; but had not reach'd the next street before a confused noise behind obliged me to stand up in the porch of a door 'till the hubbub was passed by.

The occasion of this uproar presently appeared; it was a poor fellow carried on a bier, with very little signs of life in him,—his face covered with blood which issued from his nose and mouth, his cloaths torn, that the naked flesh appeared in many places; but so deformed with bruises that it could scarce be known for what it was; a mixed rabble of men, women, and children followed, shouting, hallooing, and crying, it was good enough for him, and that they were glad he had got his reward.

I was startled at so much inhumanity; for I thought nothing could excuse such cruel treatment, though I doubted not but the fellow had been guilty of some atrocious crime; but I was soon undeceived in this point, and let into the whole affair; which was no other than a quarrel this fellow had entered into on account of Caning.

I had now no design in my head, no particular course to steer; but as I was entirely free from any engagement that evening, and thought it too soon to go home, I rambled from one street to another for a considerable time, yet without meet-
ing

ing any one thing sufficient to tempt my curiosity to make a farther enquiry into. Any observing reader may reasonably imagine, that the little satisfaction I had been able to reap in the visits I had made at the two coffee-houses I had been already in, would have hindered me from going into another, and indeed I was of that opinion myself; but I soon found I was mistaken, and so will be; I really ventured into a third; but the motive which excited me to do so was this:

As I was passing by I perceived thro' the windows, for then the candles within were lighted up, several gentlemen with news-papers before them, on which they seemed to be discoursing with each other with a great deal of seriousness and gravity. As I have naturally an extreme passion for knowing the affairs of the world, those of Europe especially, I thought it highly eligible in me to hear what was said upon them by persons who had the appearance of some understanding in them. At the first table I came to were six or seven gentlemen, most of whom were some way or other concerned in the British Herring-fishery; but tho' they talked very learnedly on the subject, it suited not my taste, so I staid not long with them, but adjourned to the next company. These were merchants, who I found were greatly disconcerted at an article they had been just reading in relation to the strict engagements the French had entered into with the Indians, and the daily incursions those mis-called friends and allies made on the English colonies; but as I cannot pretend to any skill in commerce, I did not spread my Tablets to receive the impression of their discourse; so can only say in general, that they made very heavy complaints, and cry'd out, that if speedy care were not taken to put a stop to those proceedings, trade must be

ruin'd, and our settlements in that part of the world utterly destroyed.

The third table was filled with persons who seemed to be of no avocation, nor at all interested in any branch of business or public affairs ; but talk'd of every thing they had been reading merely as things which afforded matter for conversation. On my joining them, the magnanimity of the Prussian monarch was the topic ; they extolled his wisdom, his bravery, his temperance, his clemency, the encouragement he gave to merit where-soever he found it ; and all unanimously agreed that he was the father of his people, a blessing to the land he governed, and a pattern to his fellow-rulers of the earth. The just admiration I ever had of this truly great and most amiable prince, exclusive of that regard due to him as so near a relation to our gracious Sovereign, would certainly have kept me at that table as long as the company had continued speaking on so agreeable a subject, if I had not been hurried from it by a propensity, I believe, more or less natural to all mankind, that of being most eager to explore what is hid from us with most care.

I observed at a little table, which was placed at one corner of the room, a good distance from the others, two elderly persons, who seemed very earnest in discourse on some important and secret affair ; by the winks, nods, and other insignificant gestures, I doubted not but that they were profound politicians, and were discussing some extraordinary transaction of the cabinet. Their heads were pretty close together, and they spoke in so low a voice as to render it impossible to be heard by any one except each other ; but this precaution had no efficacy when once my wonderful Tablets were display'd, which had this excellent property of receiving the impression of whatever was said within the distance

of

of nine yards, tho' utter'd in the most soft whisper. On my drawing near to them, they seem'd a little impatient for the coming of a person whom they expected, and who presently appear'd; as soon as he had seated himself the following dialogue ensued :

First Man. Oh, Mr. Slycraft, I am glad you are come; we were beginning to think you long--

Slycraft. I am somewhat beyond my hour, indeed; but I assure you nothing could have made me so but the good of the cause.

Second Man. Your zeal and diligence are not to be doubted; but let us hear what success your endeavours have met with.

Slycraft. Truly not so much as I hoped; I do not think there is a more difficult thing in the world than getting people to subscribe; I have been half the town over, and have been able to procure no more than three.

First Man. Then I hope they are fat ones.

Slycraft. Pretty well, as times go; Credulous Woodcock, Esq; has set his name for twenty guineas.

First Man. Very handsome; five or six hundred such as him would do the business.

Slycraft. Aye, but where shall we find them?

Second Man. Well, but who are the others?

Slycraft. Then there is Mr. Simon Goosly, the haberdasher, ten guineas, but has promised to prevail on some friends of his to set their names very generously.

Second Man. I dare say he will do all he can. But have you seen Mrs. Waver?

Slycraft. Yes, but she still desires a little more time to consider; says, she will enquire farther into the affair, and hear what her friends think of it; and all I could get from her was an assurance, that

if she found it proper to subscribe at all, she would not set her name for less than an hundred pieces.

First Man. Then we may be pretty certain of her ; for I know she will be directed by Mr. Cantwell, the Nonconformist preacher, who labours all he can to promote the cause in question.

Second Man. Have you yet found an opportunity of talking with the Orator ?

Slycraft. I was with him above an hour ; and when I had once convinced him that he should find his account in it, he gave me his word and honour that he would rant and roar 'till his chapel echoes in favour of the party.

First Man. That is well ; all engines must be set to work, or the town will grow cool on this business, and begin to renew their clamour against the Jew bill, &c. the spirit of the people will have vent on something or another, and you know it behoves us to keep them silent on those scores ; nothing ever did it more effectually than this we are upon ; but it must be kept up for a time : I could wish, methinks, we had the Wesleys on our side.

Second Man. 'Tis a vain attempt ; they are now grown too rich to accept of a small gratuity ; and I much question whether their exhortations would answer the expence.

Slycraft. I am of your opinion : besides, you know there is a person who can influence their congregations as much as any thing they can hear from the pulpit. But I will tell you what I have done to day. — I have engaged a clergyman of the establish'd church to write a pamphlet in behalf of the cause we have in hand.

First Man. A clergyman of the established church employ his pen in behalf of such a cause ? Prythee, Slycraft, how didst thou work upon him ? it must certainly be by some very extraordinary method.

Slycraft.

Slycraft. The promise of a small present at first wrought upon his necessities; but on my telling him who and who were concerned in this business, and the motives which induced them to be so, the hopes of having a good fat living made him wholly ours.

First Man. Admirable!

Second Man. But may we depend upon his secrecy?

Slycraft. Never doubt that, as his own interest is concern'd.

First Man. Hitherto things go pretty swimmingly on our side. But let me see the subscription book; I have received five guineas to-day from Mr. Prim, and must insert his name.

'Till now I was at the greatest loss, as 'tis probable the reader will also be, to know what all this meant, or in whose favour or on what account the subscription they talked of was raised; but on Mr. Slycraft's delivering the book to his friend, I look'd over the shoulder of the latter as he open'd it, and saw in the first leaf, by way of title-page, these words wrote in a very fair hand:

*A List of those worthy Persons who have
subscribed to the Relief of ELIZABETH
CANNING.*

The names underwritten were too numerous to be inserted; I shall therefore only say, that the sum of what was raised by their subscription amounted to little less than a thousand pounds;—Monstrous abuse of charity! Preposterous benevolence! which will hereafter reflect more shame than honour on the bestowers.——' Good God! said I to myself, 'in an age when numberless, nameless miseries abound, — when all our prisons labour with the weight of wretches confined within their walls,
' many

‘ many for small debts which their necessities
 ‘ obliged them to contract, and some by unjust
 ‘ and malicious prosecutions ; — whilst every pa-
 ‘ rish, nay almost every street, affords objects of
 ‘ real distress ; — while a girl sprung from the
 ‘ lowest dregs of the people, bred up to toil, a
 ‘ drudge, one of the very meanest class of servants,
 ‘ receives donations which she as little knows how
 ‘ to make a proper use of as to deserve ! — a girl,
 ‘ who if she had really suffer’d all she pretends to
 ‘ have done, would indeed have had a claim to
 ‘ justice against those who had wrong’d her, but
 ‘ none to the bounties so lavishly bestowed upon
 ‘ her !’

These kind of meditations would doubtless have accompanied me to my own door, if they had not been interrupted, as well as my course towards home, by an unexpected accident, which the reader will find faithfully related in the succeeding chapter.



CHAP. III.

Presents the Reader with an Adventure of much more Importance to the Public than any contained in the two foregoing Chapters.

THE human heart is liable to many bad propensities, which, if not timely corrected by reason, shoot forth into practice, and become vices ; but of these there are two sorts, — the one born with us, and part of our nature, — the other imbibed by the fatal prevalence of example, and rooted in us by custom, which is a second nature. Those born with us, as the indulging them is attended with some pleasure, urge in their defence the unconquerable desire of gratifying the senses :
 —the

—the lustful man pleads the warmth of his constitution, and the strong allurements of beauty ; — the soul of the ambitious triumphs and exults in every degree of power he gains over his fellow-creatures ; — the miser thinks himself happy in counting over his bags, and being master of a thing that will purchase all things else ; and the epicure feels no care, no sorrow, while he is emptying the full-charged goblet, and pallating the delicious viand. But what has the blasphemer, the profane swearer, or the gamester to alledge in his vindication ? These are crimes in which nature has no part, nor are the senses any way concerned in them, as they neither excite nor feel any satisfaction in them. One might therefore be apt to imagine, that men thus guilty sinn'd merely for the sake of sinning ; but I will not allow myself to think that there are many so impudently daring ; a few distinguished persons will serve to bring up a mode ; and every one knows that at present an indiscriminate imitation is the reigning folly of the English nation.

These were reflections which occur'd to me after I came home, as I was about to transcribe the remaining part of my evening's progress out of my precious Tablets. I had some farther thoughts on the occasion ; but as they might seem more proper for the pulpit than a work of this nature, I shall add no more, but proceed to the narrative of that adventure which gave rise to them.

As I was passing in my way home, thro' a street of no very good repute, two persons from a little narrow alley bolted hastily upon me, to the no small danger of my Invisibiltyship, if an agility not very common with me had not that instant enabled me to give a sudden spring, by which I avoided the rush I must otherwise have received. They went on before me ; the night was extremely dark, nei-
ther

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ther moon nor stars to assist the visual ray; but by the help of some candles burning in a shop not yet shut up, I distinguished that the one was very richly dress'd, and had much the appearance of a man of fashion; and that the other was a fellow I had often seen on many occasions, and whose character I was perfectly acquainted with.

Scarce is there a greater villain to be found in low-life; I say in low-life, because should any persons in authority, or dignified with titles, which heaven forbid, ever appear in this nation, to deserve such black denominations, their crimes would, like their ranks, be distinguished; and though placed in an orb too high to be reached by the just vengeance of their oppress'd fellow-creatures, would doubtless incur what Mr. Addison makes Cato prophetically say in relation to Julius Cæsar, on his endeavouring to subvert the old Roman constitution, and become absolute and perpetual dictator :

Sure there are bolts in the right hand of Jove,
Red with uncommon wrath to blast the man
Who over his greatness to his country's ruin,

But to return to my little knave. The wretch is now called Mr. Makeplez; he was formerly servant to a lawyer whom I employ'd in several affairs I had the misfortune to be engaged in. Living with that gentleman a considerable time, he pick'd up some scraps of law, and all the terms and phrases of that abstruse science by rote; knew how to take out a writ, set an officer to work, fill up a bail-bond, and procure evidences in a dubious cause. With this fund he had the impudence, after his master's death, to pretend he had been his clerk, got himself enter'd as an attorney, and has ever since practised as such. His sole business, however, as may be easily supposed, has always been among

among the very meanest sort of people, fomenting litigious quarrels, and then making them up, after having drained the purses on both sides. I could not therefore avoid being amazed at seeing him in the company I now did ; but my wonder soon ceased on hearing, as I was close at their heels, the following discourse between them :

Makeplea. It is very lucky, Mr. Coaxum, that I happened to be at home when you came ; there are some of the profession who would have scrupled to undertake this business ; but for my part, I am always ready to venture any thing to serve my friends.

Coaxum. My dear Makeplea, you never lost any thing, nor ever shall, by our fraternity ; I know there are some who will sneak their heads out of the collar, and leave their lawyer in the lurch.

Makeplea. Aye, faith, I narrowly escaped the pillory once ; a vile dog, who, after I had procured him three evidences, pretended a panic in his conscience, threw up his cause, and suffer'd himself to be nonsuited.

Coaxum. You know we scorn such doings ; and I can tell you this will be a pretty good job to you ; we drain'd the fool's pocket of above an hundred pieces before we play'd upon credit, so that there is enough in bank to make you a handsome present for your trouble.

Makeplea. Well, but concerning this reversion, —I hope he has lost enough to give an air of justice ; that is, a *quantum sufficit* for the making over his estate after the decease of his father ?

Coaxum. Upwards of a thousand pounds, besides a gold watch and a diamond ring, which he seems to set a high value upon ; the two last Count Cogdy has agreed to sell him again at a great price ; so that altogether the sum will amount to a sufficient

ficient purchase of the reversion of an estate of four hundred a year,—especially as the present possessor is not above fifty, and may live a long time. Besides, we hear the young fellow is going to be married to a woman of fortune, so that the deeds may be made redeemable; we do not regard his dirty acres; the ready rhino is what we want; and he may pay the money out of his wife's fortune, and be clear of us again.

Makeplea. Oh, then it will be a mortgage rather than a sale. Who are with him?

Coaxum. Only Count Cogdy, Jack Hazard, and Tom Wheadle.

Makeplea. They cannot be witnesses; as I suppose they are parties concerned.

Coaxum. We are equal sharers in the booty; but the money was lost wholly to the Count. However, there will be no want of witnesses; the landlord of the house and his son will set their hands.

These words brought them to a door, which being open'd at the first knock, by one of the most ill-look'd fellows that ever disgrac'd human nature, they went through a long, dark, narrow passage into a back parlour, where I accompanied them, and was witness of a scene somewhat like what I remember to have seen some years ago in a play of Mrs. Centlivre's, called the Gamester. Count Cogdy, as he was call'd, sat leaning his arm upon a table in a careless posture; Jack Hazard was walking backwards and forwards in the room humming an old tune; a gentleman, whose name I had not yet heard, had thrown himself across two chairs with all the tokens of despair about him; Tom Wheadle stood near him, and as we came in was endeavouring to give him some consolation, in these terms: 'Prithee, dear Clerimont, do not
' be thus disconcerted; I have lost as much as you
' twenty

' twenty times over, and as often recovered it again; these things will happen to gentlemen that play: fortune, indeed, has been against you to-night, but may not always be so; one lucky hit at another time may bring all back.'

Clerimont made no answer, nor seem'd to regard what he said, 'till hearing the name of Makeplea, and Count Cogdy beginning to instruct him in the business he was to do, that unfortunate gentleman started up at once, and staring somewhat wildly in the face of Makeplea, cry'd to him,

Clerimont. Are you the fiend who is to convey my soul, that is, my estate, into the regions of eternal darkness, whence it can never, never more return?

Makeplea. What do you mean, sir?

Cogdy. The gentleman is only a little out of humour. Faith, Mr. Clerimont, you do not do well to behave in this fashion; you have lost some money, indeed, but you have lost it fairly; I never take an advantage of any man, and shall be ready to give you your revenge at any time.

Hazard. Aye, I will say that for the Count, he scorns a mean thing.

Cogdy. I believe there is not a more unlucky fellow at play in the world than myself, though I have happen'd to win to-night; yet, as I said before, I am ready to give Mr. Clerimont an opportunity of retrieving all he has lost whenever he pleases: for my part, I would stake all I am worth against a pair of shoe-buckles, rather than any gentleman should think I impos'd upon him.

Coaxum. No, no, you are above any such thing.

Hazard. We all know that.

Makeplea. Come, come, gentlemen, this is doing nothing, all loss of time, and every moment of mine is precious; there are two noblemen now waiting

waiting for me at the Garter tavern ; pray proceed to the business ; let me know how the deeds I have brought with me are to be fill'd up.

Cagdy. I will tell you immediately ; but first I must do justice to this gentleman. Here, sir, are the watch and ring you stak'd, the value of which, you know, is added to the other sums.

Clerimont put the one in his pocket and the other on his finger with a deep sigh, and the Count went on repeating to Makeplea the substance of what he was to write ; the latter, at the end of every article, demanded of Clerimont, whether he agreed to it ; to which he sullenly reply'd, ' I do ; ' I see no other remedy.' The lawyer having dispatched his part, Clerimont was desired to sign and seal ; he did both, but with such a trembling hand, and visible distraction of mind, that my heart bled for him. In delivering the writings to the Count, he said,

Clerimont. There, sir ;—I suppose this is all that is required of me, and I may now depart.

Cagdy. No, no, we must have a bottle and a bird together, to shew we are all still good friends.

Hazard. Aye, and each of us a wench too ; I know where there is a covey of as young, pretty, plump partridges as any in Covent-Garden.

Clerimont. Rot your bottle, and your bird, and your wenches ; I have done with them, and you, and the whole world for ever.

In speaking these words he snatch'd up his sword and hat, and ran directly out of the house. As for me, I had as little inclination as himself to stay in the company of such blood-suckers ; but having never seen him before, I was curious to know somewhat more of him, and also how he would behave when alone, and at liberty to ruminate on the misfortune he had plunged himself into, so follow'd his steps with all the speed I could.

It

It was not difficult to keep pace with him ; for though he gained ground of me at first, he soon halted, and gave me an opportunity of coming up with him. Never did man traverse the streets with more disorder'd motions, crossing the way an hundred times, I believe, within the space of half a quarter of a mile, without having the least occasion to do so : sometimes he would run as if in pursuit of somebody, and sometimes stand quite still ; and it was well the darkness of the night befriended him, otherwise whoever had met him would doubtless have taken him to be mad.

In this fashion he went thro' part of the Strand, and turn'd down one of those streets leading to the water-side ; he stopp'd about the middle of it at a door, and had his hand upon the knocker, but a sudden thought coming that instant into his head, he left it without making the signal for admittance, and walked slowly to the end of the street, where leaning on a little wall that overlooks the river, he remain'd for some minutes in the most thoughtful and contemplative attitude ; then said to himself,
 • How profound ! ——— How solemn is the silent
 • scene ! inviting to a certain rest from misery and
 • shame ! Here, within the bosom of this friendly
 • element, may all my follies and misfortunes be
 • hid for ever from the talking world !

I fear'd nothing less would ensue, than that I should see him presently attempt to do as his words had hinted ; I therefore drew as near to him as I could, in order to prevent so bad an effect of his despair. Here I cannot help remarking, that if the thing had happen'd as I expected, and Clerimont had found himself snatch'd from his fate by an Invisible hand, he would doubtless have imagined his preservation owing to the interposition of some Supernatural Being, and reported it as a miracle.

But how he would have acted on such an odd occasion is uncertain; for after a pause, and disburthening himself of some few sighs, he started from the posture he had been in, and cry'd, 'No, —it must not be;—I have some business still for life,——revenge on the cursed cheat, the villain that has undone me. Love too demands something from me; but by what means I shall repay that mighty debt, I know not. — Oh Charlotte! Charlotte! on how lost a wretch hast thou bestow'd thy heart!'

These words were utter'd with a groan which seem'd to cleave his breast, and were the last I heard from him at that time: he turn'd back, and went hastily to the house where he had first stopp'd, the door was open'd on his knocking, and too suddenly shut again for me to have enter'd with him if I had intended it; but the variety of accidents presented to me in this evening's ramble had already sufficiently filled my head, and made me glad to retire to my repose.



C H A P. IV.

Relates some Passages which may probably draw Sighs from many a tender Heart of both Sexes.

THE next morning running over in my mind the detail of the transactions of the evening before, the vexation I had received on the score of Betty Canning very much subsided, and I looked upon the whole thing as below a serious consideration. I could not help, indeed, retaining some concern that the people of England should be so infatuated as to suffer their thoughts to be led astray and alienated from affairs of the greatest consequence by such an idle story; but as I doubted not but ~~that~~

that the imposition she had been guilty of would be detected, though her abettors might perhaps find means to screen her person from the punishment, I became more easy, and resolved to banish as much as possible all remembrance of it.

But my ideas were widely different in regard to poor Clerimont; as much a stranger as he was to me, I was convinced, by what I had seen and heard, that as he had no stock of ready money to prevent the mortgage he had made of his reversion, so I was equally assured, by his despair, that he had no visible means of raising a sum sufficient to redeem it. His calling on the name of Charlotte with so much vehemence made me also not doubt but that he had some tender attachment, which he feared would be broke through by what he had done.

Though I know no vice for which I have a more real contempt than the love of gaming, yet the age of this gentleman, which could not exceed three-and-twenty, seem'd to me a very moving plea in his behalf, and the graces of his mien and aspect so much interested me in his favour, that I less blamed his inadvertency than compassionated the misfortune it had brought him into. In fine, his person and his sufferings had made a very strong impression on me; he was the first object of my waking thoughts; and my impatience to be better acquainted with his circumstances obliged me to leave my bed some hours before the time in which I was accusom'd to do so. I rose in a hurry, transcribed what I had been relating, and got the dialogues expunged from my Tablets by the pure fingers of my little virgin; then hasted to the house where I had seen Clerimont enter the night before, and which, by the help of some lamps in the street, I had taken sufficient notice of to be able to know again. The door was luckily open when I

came

came to it; a servant-maid, who seemed to have more inclination to hold a gossip's tale than to do the business she was hired for, stood leaning with both her hands upon her mop, very earnest in discourse with one of her own occupation in the neighbourhood; a few words served to convince me that these wenches were descanting on the affairs of the families they lived in, which, as I was not at present in a humour to pry into, I staid not to hear what was said, but went directly into the house, and up stairs, supposing Clerimont might be lodged in the first floor. I was not deceived; I found him writing at his bureau in the dining-room, a letter lay by him directed to Count Cogdy; this was folded and ready for sealing, so it was not in my power to examine the contents; but his pen, on my entrance, was employ'd on another, which, looking over his shoulder, I saw was dictated in the following terms:

‘ My only dear, and for ever
‘ dear CHARLOTTE,

‘ A THOUSAND heart-renting sighs,—a thousand pangs, more terrible than any death can inflict, accompany every syllable of this distracted epistle! I foresee the anguish it will give you, and feel all the weight of yours added to my own. Oh, Charlotte! I must see you no more! —that love so long cemented by the utmost proofs of mutual tenderness, and so near being fulfill'd in a happy union, must be now broke off at once,—dissolved for ever! I have renounced all claim to every future good, and justly incur'd the fate that now attends me!—a few hours will inform you, that I either do not exist at all, or exist only to be, a vagrant! a wretched exile from father, country, friends, and you, more
‘ dear

dear than all ! In fine, my Charlotte, such is the sad necessity to which I have reduced myself, as compels me to do a thing which Nature most abhors : I go this morning either to kill or be kill'd ; which of these two shall happen is in the hand of Heaven ; each equally tears me from every earthly comfort. I chose to acquaint you previously with this accident, to the end you may be less surpris'd when you shall hear it from the mouth of others.—I can say no more.—Farewel, thou loveliest, best, and dearest of thy sex.—Hate not the memory of the undone

CLERIMONT.

P. S. As I have rendered myself unworthy of preserving any marks of your affection, I return the ring with which you blest my finger in our happier days. Accept once more my last adieu : May endle's blessings wait you, superior, if possible, to my woes !

This unhappy gentleman dissembled not in the lines he wrote ; his heart now laboured with agonies greater than could be expressed with words, which shew'd themselves in every look and gesture. After having carefully inclosed the ring, and put both that and the letter under a cover, he order'd a chairman to be call'd, and delivering to him both these dispatches, and telling him where they were to be carried, he proceeded to give some farther instructions : — ‘ This to Miss Charlotte you are to leave with her servant, with orders to give it to her lady when she is stirring :—this to Count Cogdy requires an immediate answer, which you must wait for.’ The fellow, having assured him that he would be punctual in obeying his commands, went on his errand, and Clerimont continued walking backwards and forwards in the room with a motion extremely discomposed, then

threw himself down on a settee, and presently seem'd buried, as it were, in a profound resverie.

I am pretty certain it was a full half hour before he exchanged this fixed and death-like position for one in a quite contrary extreme; his looks and gestures now, methought, had somewhat like frantic in them: he beat his head against the wainscot, stamp'd, and every now and then burst into the most vehement exclamations,—some of which are these: ‘How unhappy a creature is man! the very reason we are so proud of makes us miserable! the brutes, equally void of passions as of sorrow, neither feel torments here, nor dread a future hell! What will poor Charlotte say on reading my letter? How will my father support the story of my fate when it shall reach his ears? Wretch! wretch that I am,——born to be a curse to all who love me!’

The return of the chairman brought him a little to his senses, and he demanded hastily whether he had got an answer from Count Cogdy; to which the man reply'd,

Chairman. No, sir; I went there first, but the people of the house told me he was not stirring, nor they believed would be for a great while, so I went on to madam Charlotte's, and left the letter with her maid, as your honour bid me; but I had not got above half the street before her footboy ran after me, and said his lady would speak to me; on which I went back with him.

Clerimont. Charlotte already up!—that's strange.
——What did she say to you?

Chairman. Sir, she only ask'd where the gentleman was that sent the letter by me, and whether you were alone: I told her you were at home, and that there was nobody with you that I saw;——she said it was very well, and I came away, went again to the Count's, and waited there 'till his

his own man told me that his master had not been in bed above two hours, and he was sure would not rise till twelve or one o'clock at soonest; said I might leave the letter, and come about that time for an answer; — now as I did not know whether that would be proper, I thought best to bring it back.

Clerimont. You did well; ——— I shall see him myself.

On this the chairman laid down the letter on the table, and finding Clerimont had no farther commands for him withdrew. Clerimont then fell into a second pause, but it lasted not long, and he cry'd out, — 'Yes, I will go, and perhaps 'tis better that he did not see my billet; he might have found some way to evade the challenge I sent him; but I shall now surprize and force him to accept it.'

While he was speaking, he stepp'd to the closet and brought out a pair of pocket pistols, with some ammunition to load them with; he was just beginning to perform that work when the maid of the house came up and told him a lady desired to speak with him. Clerimont turn'd hastily about, but before he had time to speak, his fair guest was in the room: — Charlotte — for it was she herself, but extremely disordered both in her dress and looks. On finding how Clerimont was employ'd, she thus accosted him:

Charlotte. Oh, Clerimont! — Clerimont! ——— what means that cruel letter you just now sent me? Wherefore these dreadful preparations? — tell me, this instant tell me, or I shall die with apprehension!

Clerimont. Ah, Charlotte! never 'till now unwelcome to my sight, why in this fatal moment dost thou set before me that angelic form, which

serves but to remind me more of the Heaven I have lost !

Charlotte. Shock not my soul with this despair, yet cruelly conceal from me the cause ! I have a right to be made the partner of your griefs as well as joys ; speak then, I conjure you, let me know all.

Clerimont. I cannot !

Charlotte. You love me not if you hide ought from me ! the worst of evils could not give me half the pain as this uncertainty ! Clear then the tempest on your brow, compose your mind, remove those murderous instruments from my sight, and,—Ha !—what's here ?

pointing towards the pistols she saw the letter directed to Count Cogdy, which she hastily snatch'd up, and went on, saying,

Charlotte. A letter to that infamous villain !—then I guess what has happen'd ;—some curst gaming quarrel !—Clerimont, I must read this letter.

Clerimont. You may ; it will in part reveal what my tongue has not the power to utter.

Ever since my coming into the room I had been extremely impatient to see the contents of this billet ; so while the lady, with a trembling hand, was breaking open the seal, I slipp'd behind her, and read, at the same time she did, these lines :

‘ S I R,

‘ I Remember that in the midst of my confusion last night you offered to give me my revenge whenever I should demand it, which I now do, and expect you will meet me within an hour in the long field behind the basin in Mary-le-bon, arm'd with sword and pistol ; for it is not with cards or dice we now must try our skill :
‘ —you have left me nothing but my life to lose,
‘ and

‘ and I am impatient ’till I stake it against yours ;
 ‘ come without a second, for I know no gentleman
 ‘ whom I would demean so far as to engage him
 ‘ with any of your infamous associates. If you
 ‘ refuse to comply with this summons, which does
 ‘ you too much honour, you may depend that the
 ‘ first time I see you, in what place soever it be, I
 ‘ shall make you an example to all scoundrels,
 ‘ cheats, and cowards.—So no more at present
 ‘ from

‘ CLERIMONT.’

‘ P. S. Send your answer by the bearer.’

Charlotte. Then you would fight ! would hazard a life so precious to me, only in revenge for being defrauded of a paultry sum ! Pray how much have you lost ?

Clerimont. My all.

Charlotte. Be more explicit.

He then related to her all the particulars of his misfortune, which, as the reader is already acquainted with them, it would be needless to repeat. When he had given over speaking, Charlotte, with the greatest serenity and sweetness, said to him,

Charlotte. And is this all that has disconcerted you in so terrible a manner ?

Clerimont. What means my Charlotte ?—Am I not a beggar, irrecoverably a beggar ?

Charlotte. How can that be, when you say the writings will be return’d to you on payment of a thousand pounds ? and am not I in possession of eight times that sum, which, with myself, you are shortly to be master of ?

Clerimont. Plunder my Charlotte ! no ; forbid it honour, justice, love ! first let me perish !

Charlotte. Be not so rash ; you must, you shall accept it.

Clerimont. O Charlotte! could I abuse such goodness, I were a villain, meaner, viler far than he that has undone me.

Charlotte. Indeed I will not be denied; and if you persist in this obstinacy, will go myself in person, pay the money, and redeem the obligation.

Clerimont. Oh, speak not! think not of such a thing, unless you wish to see me turn against myself one of those weapons I intended for my adversary.

Charlotte. Hold, Clerimont, forbear to fright me thus! Just as you spoke, a sudden thought started into my head, as if there were a way to rid you of this incumbrance without any expence either to yourself or me.

Clerimont. How? by what miracle?

Charlotte. The project is not yet quite fashioned in my brain; but you must come with me to my lodgings, for I dare not trust you with yourself; as we go, perhaps I may be able to bring my scheme to more perfection.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte, thy softness quite unmans me.

Charlotte. No; 'tis your own despair unmans you; let me prevail on you to give only some respite to these horrible ideas.

Clerimont. Well, you must be obeyed; I will defer the execution of my intentions 'till another day.

Charlotte seem'd transported at having won thus far upon him, and a coach being call'd, they both went into it: I listened to the directions given where to drive, and, eager to know what turn this affair would take, followed on foot as fast as I was able.

C H A P. V.

May possibly become the Subject of some future Comedy, as there is nothing in the Story that can be objected to by the Licence-Office.

AMONG all the indefatigable enquiries I had so long been making after things intended to be kept secret, never had my curiosity met with a greater disappointment than it did at the time I am speaking of: I arrived at the house where Charlotte lodged, the very moment that the coach which brought that lady and her lover thither was discharged and driving off, and had the mortification to see the door shut when I was not at the distance of above ten paces from it. Every present minute however flattering me with the hopes that the succeeding ones would be more successful, I waited, though I cannot say with much patience, about two hours, no one having any occasion, I suppose, either to go out or in: — at last a friendly baker knocked at the door, which being open'd, I took the opportunity to slip in while he delivered a loaf of bread to the servant of the house.

I went up stairs, and found the persons I sought for in the dining-room: but here, alas, I was a second time disappointed; the grand consultation between them was over before my entrance; and what I heard after I came in, could not make me able to form any judgment of the subject they had been upon; I could only know that something of great moment had been concluded, as the reader will easily perceive by the following short dialogue:

Charlotte. You cannot imagine how much you have obliged me by this confession; but I will not detain you lest the villain should be gone out. Re-

member to fix the appointment at seven, or between seven and eight this evening.

Clerimont. Yes, yes.

Charlotte. By that time I shall be able to get every thing in order, and you will see I shall play my part as well as the best actresses of them all : do you take care that no unguarded look or word gives the Count any room to suspect you are less in good humour than you pretend to be.

Clerimont. Fear not ; I shall be cautious not to spoil so good a plot by my ill performance.

Charlotte. If it succeeds, as I have not the least doubt it will, the story will be a subject of mirth for us as lasting as our lives.

Clerimont. And as lasting a subject for my admiration of the wit and contrivance of my dear, dear Charlotte.

Charlotte. Well, well, defer your encomiums 'till a seasonable opportunity : I long, methinks, to have this business over ; and it is high time for you to begin to set the first wheel of our machine in motion.

Clerimont. I am going. — Adieu, my love.

He accompanied these words with a very tender and passionate salute, then left the room. Though I easily perceived that Charlotte had somewhat of great importance to transact in this affair, yet as I could not be in two places at once, I chose to follow Clerimont. He went directly to Cogdy's lodgings, and on asking if he were at home, was shew'd into a handsome parlour, where, after waiting about a minute, the Count's servant came to him, and said his master had not been long out of bed, and was not quite dress'd, but desired he would walk up ; which he did, with his Invisible attendant close behind him. The Count no sooner saw him enter, than he ran to embrace him with a French complaisance, saying at the same time,

Cogdy.

Cogdy. Dear Clerimont, I am glad to see you.

Clerimont. My dear Count, a lucky morning to you.—I behaved somewhat oddly last night, and could not be easy 'till I came and ask'd your pardon.

Cogdy. Oh, sir, you have it, you have it;—I thought no more of it; I know 'tis natural for a gentleman to be a little out of humour at first losing his money.

Clerimont. But I was less excusable than you imagine; for to confess the truth, I had in Bank-bills upwards of two thousand pounds lying in my bureau at home, so was under no necessity either of playing either upon tick or of troubling a lawyer to mortgage the reversion of my estate.

Cogdy. Is it possible? Are you in earnest?

Clerimont. To convince you I am so, you shall have the testimony of your own eyes: see here, Count, and here.

In speaking this he took out of his pocket-book several bills to the amount of the sum he had mention'd: the Count stretch'd his eyes broad open, look'd at the bills, seem'd much surpris'd, and said,

Cogdy. These are Bank-bills indeed!

Clerimont. Aye, I can turn them into ready specie at any banker's in town.

Cogdy. Well, I cannot help wondering how a man, who had two thousand pounds by him, could suffer himself to be disconcerted at the loss of one.

Clerimont. Hang it, it was not the loss of the money that vexed me; but I had the hyp, and that damn'd hyp makes one affront one's best friends.

Cogdy. So then I suppose you will redeem your mortgage?

Clerimont. Time enough for that. But now I think on it, you offer'd me my revenge, and I will e'en try my chance once more.

Cogdy. As how?

N 5

Clerimont.

Clerimont. Why stake one of these thousands against my mortgage ; so either win the horse or lose the saddle.

Cogdy. With all my heart, — whenever you please.

Clerimont. Let it be to-night then.

Cogdy. Agreed. Will you stay and dine with me ?

Clerimont. I am engaged with a young fellow just come to town, and to the possession of a great estate ; but I will meet you at night, and perhaps bring him with me.

Cogdy. Do ; I shall be glad of his acquaintance.

Clerimont. We knew one another in the country ; he will go any where with me. — But hark'ye, Count, I don't like that house we were in last night ; every thing in it, methinks, has the face of poverty and ill luck ; my young spark is vastly nice, and will be apt to turn up his nose at it ; can't you think of a more agreeable place ?

Cogdy. I know of several : the only reason that makes me chuse to go thither so often, is because I think it the most safe. This cursed act of parliament has laid such restriction on us who love play, that it is not every where we dare venture to indulge ourselves in that diversion.

Clerimont. What objection have you to Mixum's, in ***** street ?

Cogdy. 'Tis a good house, and excellent accommodation. But don't you know that it was searched three or four nights ago by a whole posse of constables ?

Clerimont. Yes ; but they found nothing of what they came to look for ; therefore the most secure at present, as they will scarce come again in haste.

Cogdy. Well then, we will meet there if you please. At what hour ?

Clerimont.

Clerimont. Seven, or a little after, if it suits you.

Cogdy. Extremely well ; then we shall have the whole evening before us.

He was about to take his leave, and had rose up for that purpose, when Wheadle, Hazard, and Coaxum, came all together into the room : they seem'd a little surpris'd at seeing him there, but saluted him with their usual familiarity.

Hazard. Hah ! dear Clerimont, good morning to you.

Wheadle. Now you look like yourself again ; you were quite another man last night.

Coaxum. Aye, faith, you must expect to be well roasted.

Clerimont. I know I deserve it ; but you must defer your sarcasms 'till night ; for I am in great haste at present,—so, gentlemen, your servant.

He was going out of the room with these words ; but just as he came to the door, he turn'd back and said to Count Cogdy.

Clerimont. Be sure, Count, not to forget to bring the writings with you.

Cogdy. No, no, they have never been out of my pocket since you delivered them to me last night.

There pass'd no more between them. Clerimont went hastily down stairs, and I gladly would have follow'd him, but Hazard and Wheadle happen'd to stand between the door and the corner where I had unluckily posted myself, so that it was impossible for me to remove my quarters without running a very great risque of being felt either by the one or the other. During the short time I was compelled to stay, I heard the following conversation, which I would not trouble my readers with the repetition of, but to shew what monsters

of mankind these degenerate wretches are who get their livelihood by gaming.

Coaxum. What does he mean by writings ? sure he is not going to redeem his mortgage ?

Cogdy. No ; but he is going to send a thousand, or 'tis likely two thousand pounds after it. We have made an appointment to play again to-night.

Hazard. What upon tick ?

Wheadle. Phoo, that is doing of nothing ; the fool has no more estates in reversion to make over.

Cogdy. You cannot imagine me so weak as to lose my time with a fellow that has no money nor effects : no, no ; I always go upon good grounds. I tell you he has two thousand pounds in Bank bills ; he shew'd them to me.

Hazard. How did he come by them ?

Cogdy. 'Tis no matter to us how he came by them ; we are sure of making them ours before we sleep.

Wheadle. They must certainly be bills his father has intrusted him with, to buy stock either for himself or some of his friends in the country ; the young fellow will hang himself to-morrow, when he reflects on what he has done.

Hazard. Let him hang himself, when we have got all he has to lose.

Cogdy. Aye, aye ; but I can tell you better news than this ; he brings a rich young heir with him, one that knows nothing of the world, a mere sap, a green-horn : there will be fleecing, my boys !

Just as the Count had done speaking, some little noise in the street made them all run to the windows, by which means I got the so-much wish'd-for opportunity of escaping from my confinement. When I found myself at liberty I began to consider not only on what I had seen and heard, but also on what I had not seen nor heard ; I was still as much in the dark as ever as to Charlotte's contrivance,

trivance, and could not keep myself from fretting at the many disappointments I had met with on that account : I was doom'd, however, to receive yet one more.

Though I doubted not but when the gamesters met the whole would be laid open to me, yet the time seemed too tedious for my impatience ; I wanted to know the business of the plot before I saw it acted, and set myself to think on the most probable means to accomplish my designs ; accordingly I went to the lodgings of Charlotte, hoping to find Clerimont there, and discover something farther by the discourse they would have together ; but to my great mortification perceived the room quite empty, except a little lap-dog lying on a cushion before the fire. I had now no other resource than to go home to dinner, which I did ; and after having got my Tablets made ready to receive a new impresson, diverted myself in the best manner I could, 'till the hour arrived which enabled me to explore what at present appeared so mysterious to me.



CHAP. VI.

*Will put a final Period to the Suspence of my Readers,
in relation to Clerimont and Charlotte.*

AS precious a thing as time is, and as much as I always knew the real value of it, the hours, methought, moved slowly on till the clock struck seven, and told me that I might now hope for the full eclairsissement of an adventure I had already taken so much fruitless pains to explore. Pretty secure, however, that I should not lose my labour any more on this occasion, I went with great glee and jollity of mind to the house of Mr. Mixum.

Count

Count Cogdy and his three associates came presently after, and were shewed into the best room, where I accompanied them. On their calling for wine, Mixum came up with it himself to pay his compliments, as not having seen them for a considerable time; and there ensued some discourse concerning the search-warrant that had been granted against the house, the manner in which those persons who were there had made their escape from the officers, and such like affairs, which not being at all material to my purpose, I not regarded, nor spread my Tablets to receive.

Within about half an hour Clerimont and his young friend appeared; the first sight of the latter extremely struck me, I thought I had somewhere seen that face, but when, or where, or on what occasion, I could not presently recollect, and it was some minutes before I knew this seeming beau for a real belle: in fine, it was no other than Charlotte herself: she was, indeed, so artfully disguised in all points, that a person much better acquainted with her features might have been deceived; her cheeks, which had naturally no more red in them than was necessary to preserve her complexion from the character of a dead paleness, were now, by the help of carmine, or Portugal paste, of a high ruddy colour; her eye-brows, which were of a fine light-brown, were now black as jet; and that sweet and modest air, so becoming in the amiable Charlotte, converted into one all bold and rakish.

Clerimont, with a well-dissembled gaiety in his voice and countenance, presented her to the company, telling them he had taken the liberty to introduce a friend, whose conversation he doubted not but would be agreeable to them. They received her with the greatest politeness and good breeding; for I must here observe, that tho' these men, either through the calamities of the times, or
their

their own mismanagement and ill conduct, were reduced to the wretched course they now took for subsistence, they had all of them been endow'd with a liberal education, and knew how to behave like persons of real honour and fashion whenever they found it suitable to their interest to do so. The glass went round two or three times while they talked only of ordinary matters; but our fair Amazon being impatient, I suppose, to put the finishing stroke to the stratagem she had form'd, started up on a sudden, and said,

Charlotte. Well but, gentlemen, how are we to pass the evening? I hope in somewhat more agreeable than mere chit-chat. Clerimont talk'd of play, and I see you have implements ready.

Cogdy. Sir, we amuse ourselves that way sometimes, and if you chuse it, I shall be ready to oblige you.

Charlotte. Oh, by all means; I love play extravagantly; the music of a dice-box is to me beyond all Handel's operas and oratorios: here is more real harmony than in the spheres themselves, and I could dance eternally to the sound. Come, gentlemen, which of you will engage me? I have some loose pieces in my pocket, which I am ready to throw away, if chance should so determine.

Hazard. Then, sir, I am your man, if you think fit; for I know the Count has made an agreement to play with Clerimont on a very particular occasion.

Charlotte. Then, sir, I will content myself a while with being a by-stander.

Hazard. You need not, sir; you see here are more tables than one.

Charlotte. Aye; but I chuse to bet on my friend's side.

Hazard. Nay, as you please for that; we shall any of us be ready to take you up.

The

The Count and Clerimont being now in an attitude to play, and the writings laid down on one side, and a thousand pound bank bill on the other, Charlotte cry'd out,

Charlotte. What ! — paper against parchment ? these are the oddest stakes I ever saw. Yours, Clerimont, I think, is a thousand pounds ?

Cogdy. I assure you, sir, that mine is the full equivalent.

Charlotte. I believe so ; but before you begin you must give me leave to speak a word or two.

Cogdy. As many as you please, sir.

Charlotte. It is only this ; — you must lose, Count.

Cogdy. Must lose, sir !

Charlotte. Aye, sir, must lose.

Cogdy. That, sir, must happen as fortune shall decree.

Charlotte. Sir, I stand in the place of fortune, and tell you that you must lose those writings to Clerimont.

Hazard. What means all this ?

Cogdy. I do not understand you, sir.

Charlotte. I will speak plainer ; your false dice will be of no service to you at this time ; you must willingly return to Clerimont that deed of reversion which you drew him in to sign as a security for money you had basely cheated him of ; I say willingly, for if you do not I am come prepared with means to force you to it.

Cogdy. Sir, I scorn both your words and threats ; I never cheated any man, nor will part with what chance has bestowed upon me.

Hazard. 'Sdeath, shall we be bullied by such a prig.

Charlotte. None of your big words, I have that will silence you ; see here, the copy of a warrant from Justic Ferrit, to apprehend and bring before him

him the bodies of George Van Hellmock, alias Count Cogdy, John Hazard, Thomas Wheadle, and William Coaxum; the original of this is in the hands of persons who, on the least stamp of my foot, will come up and put it in execution.

The gamesters now looked on each other with all the marks of consternation; but before they had time to make any reply to what Charlotte had said, Mixum, all pale and trembling, came running into the room, and said,

Mixum. Oh, gentlemen, we are all undone! three or four constables are at the door; one of my drawers saw them as he went out to carry a pint of wine to a neighbour's house; and there is a young man below too, who I dare say is a spy, for he does not stay in the room, but walks backwards and forwards in the entry, and looks at every body as they pass by; so that there is no escaping either one way or the other.

Charlotte. He tells you truth; the person he speaks of is planted there by me, and on my giving the signal will call in his mirmidons; so that you have nothing for it but to deliver the writings quietly to Clerimont; if you do this, I will instantly go down and send away the officers, under pretence that the information was wrong, and that no gamesters were here.

Cogdy. Confusion! What is to be done?

Hazard. 'Sdeath, Count! — do not part with the writings! we'll fight our way through them!

Charlotte. Nay, then, I give the signal.

She advanced towards the door with these words; but Mixum threw himself between, and with the most pity-moving gesture said,

Mixum. Hold, sir, I beseech you! consider, I never offended you! — do not ruin me and my house for ever!

Clerimont.

Clerimont. Oh, you will be provided with lodgings in Bridewell, and fare no worse than these worthy gentlemen here, your customers.

Cogdy. Well, I did not think Mr. Clerimont would have turned informer.

Clerimont. Nor did I think I had associated myself with common sharpers, cheats and villains, 'till last night convinced me of it.

Charlotte. These altercations are only loss of time; the officers will be impatient; speak, Count, resolve at once; shall I dismiss, or call them to the exercise of their function?

Cogdy. Hell and the devil! What say you, gentlemen?

Wheadle. E'en give up the writings, and the devil go with them.

Coaxum. Aye, aye, give them up.

Hazard. Since there is no remedy, I give my vote.

Cogdy. Nothing vexes me so much as to be thus outwitted, gull'd, trick'd.—There, Mr. Clerimont, take back your mortgage; but I must tell you, sir, that you have not acted like a gentleman.

Clerimont. I threw off the gentleman when I condescended to play in such company; a gamester is the lowest and most infamous of all characters, nay, the most dangerous too; worse even than a highway robber;—he takes but part; you plunder, without remorse, the whole fortune of him whom you decoy into your snares;—nor can there be any excuse from your necessities, while we have so numerous a fleet and standing army, which are continually wanting recruits, and refuse none who have health and vigour.

Cogdy. Sir, you have got what you wanted; so pray keep your remonstrances to yourself.

Charlotte.

Charlotte. Ayè, aye, advice is lost on such hardened profligates. Come, let us go.

Clerimont. I attend you.

Neither Clerimont nor his fair champion said any more, but went directly out of the room: a volley of curses from the mouths of all these miscreants pursued their steps. I had no inclination to stay where I was; but just as I pass'd the door I heard Jack Hazard, who was the most violent of the four, say to his companions, 'It is that saucy, pert, young coxcomb that has spirited up Clerimont to do all this; but if ever I meet him in a convenient place, I'll pink him. — I'll make a loop-hole in his flesh big enough to let out twenty such puny souls.'

I could not forbear laughing within myself at this menace, which, though it shew'd the villainous disposition of the wretch who spoke it, I knew was impossible ever to reach the person it was levelled against. The amiable and witty Charlotte kept her promise, and on her coming down stairs, gave orders to the young man who waited her commands to send away the constables; after which she took coach with her lover, attended with as many blessings and good wishes from Mixum as she had been loaded with curses from those above.

As I could expect no more from this adventure than the retribution of Clerimont to his beloved Charlotte for the happy deliverance she had given him from destruction, and which I could easily conceive without hearing, I returned to my own apartment, in order to get my Tablets made ready for the acquisition of some new discovery. I must not, however, take leave of these lovers' without letting the public know that a marriage between them, which had some time before been agreed upon, is now consummated, and that Clerimont, sincerely

cerely touched with the danger he has escaped, has made a firm resolution never to play but for small sums, and for those only with persons whose honour and integrity he is well assured of. As for the gamesters, they still continue to infest this great town, like Satan, watching to devour all the prey they can get into their clutches. If this little narrative may warn any one person to avoid the snare, the pains I have taken to explain it will be well rewarded.



C H A P. VII.

Contains something which perhaps there are more Ladies than one will not think themselves obliged to the Author for revealing.

THERE is no resentment so implacable and lasting as that which is occasioned by love converted into hatred by ill treatment; and by the more slow degree this passion rises in our minds, the more virulent it becomes after having once gained possession.

Cleanthes, a gentleman of good family, great worth, and opulent estate, loved to the most romantic excess a young woman, who, excepting a tolerable share of beauty, had no one real charm to recommend her to a person of his character: she was meanly born, more meanly educated;—she was silly, vain, capricious, and of a reputation not quite unblemished. Yet did he no sooner become acquainted with her, than he broke off the addresses he had long made to a lady of great merit and fortune; and in a short time, contrary to all the remonstrances and dissuasions of his friends, publicly married her.

Being

Being a husband made him not less a lover ; his obsequiousness is not to be parallel'd ; his whole study was to please her, every succeeding day brought with it an addition of his dotage of her ; he was always happy in her presence, never easy in her absence ; and, to use Shakespear's expression,

Appetite increased by what it fed on.

Aglaura, for so she is call'd, had so little sense of the happiness she enjoy'd, or affection or gratitude for the man who bestow'd it on her, that she presently gave the greatest loose to her too amorous inclinations ; thought of nothing but engaging new admirers, and to that end made advances, which it would be shocking to repeat, to every pretty fellow she came in company with, even before the face of her much injured husband, who, blinded by his passion, for a long time look'd on all she did as proceeding only from the too great vivacity of her temper. Had she observed the least degree of circumspection in her amours, he would scarce ever have believed there was a possibility of her being guilty ; but she took no pains to deceive him, and tho' she knew he lived but in her sight, was scarce ever at home ; and through the want either of artifice or complaisance, gave herself not the pains of making any excuses for her continual rambles.

This made him at last fall into a deep melancholy ; yet still he loved her, and could not for a great while prevail on himself to lay any restrictions on her conduct : all who had any knowledge of the manner in which they lived together, while they highly condemned her treatment of him, were ready to despise his lenity and forbearance. At length, however, the tables were entirely turned ; from having been at first the most fond, and afterwards

wards the passive husband, he became, all at once, the most cruel and tyrannic; he took from her all the jewels and other ornaments he had bestowed upon her, lock'd her into a garret, suffered no one to come near her, except a servant who carried food to her of the coarsest kind, and no more than would just suffice to keep her from perishing.

It cannot be supposed but that so strange an alteration in the behaviour of the late fond, and indeed madly doating Cleanthes, must become the subject of much conversation in town. A lady of my acquaintance, who is reckoned to have some taste for poetry, shew'd me a few lines she had wrote on the occasion, which I think may not be disagreeable to my readers.—They are as follow :

*On the present Cruelty of CLEANTHES to a WIFE
whom he once loved to as great an Excess.*

AS Tapers languish at th' approach of day,
And, by degrees, melt slow their shine away,
Awhile they glimmer with contracted fires,
Trembling, unable to relax their spires ;
But when the Sun's broad eye is open'd wide,
And beams, thick flashing, shoot on ev'ry side,
No more their emulative force they try,
But, struck with radiance, sink at once and die.

So in his heart Love long maintain'd its pace,
'Till full Conviction glar'd him in the face,
And forc'd th' unwilling softness to give way
To Hate, and Rage, and fierce Resentment's sway.

Unhappy man !

What wild extremes hurry thy head-strong will !
What boist'rous passions thy vex'd bosom fill !
To Reason's sacred rules a truant still.
Whoe'er he be the golden mean foregoes,
Exchanges hop'd-for joys for certain woes.

By all the discourses I heard wherever I went, concerning this affair, I found, that though scarce any one pitied Aglaura, yet almost every one condemned Cleanthes, no less for his present ill usage of her, than they had formerly done for the extravagance of his love.

‘ It is beneath the dignity of a man of sense or honour, — said one, — to treat thus inhumanly a woman, how unworthy soever she may be, who is yet his wife.’

‘ If she is really guilty of having wronged his bed, — cry’d another, — as indeed there is not the least room to doubt, why, on the discovery of her crime, did he not turn her out of doors? — why did he not sue for a divorce?’

It is certain that his way of proceeding with her appeared so odd, that many people were apt to think that her present sufferings were rather owing to a change in his own humour than to any detection he had made of her falshood: — others, on the contrary, imagined he still loved her, and that after he had punished her awhile he would forgive all that was past, and again take her to his bosom. Various, and widely different conjectures were formed in relation both to the husband and the wife, at all which I laugh’d in my sleeve; believing, I dare say, with a good deal of reason, that no one person in the whole world, except the Invisible Spy, was at the bottom of this secret: the means by which I became master of it I shall now acquaint my readers with.

I supp’d one night at the house of an intimate friend at Kensington, and happening to stay there more late than it was judged safe for me to go home alone, was very much press’d by him to take a servant with me; but knowing I had better security about me than any servant could be, rejected his offer; and when I was got a little way from
the

the house, girded on my Belt of Invincibility, and walk'd on at my leisure, equally free from danger as from fear.

Many minutes had not elapsed in this employment before I was disturbed from it by the murmurs of some human voices which I heard at a small distance; my natural curiosity making me draw nearer to the place whence the sound proceeded, I easily distinguished a man of good appearance holding by the arm a genteel well-dress'd woman, whom he seem'd rather to drag than lead. As these persons were no other than Cleanthes and Aglaura, I shall insert what was said by each of them under their respective names.

Cleanthes. Shameless wretch!—Can you call it an innocent frolic to come to the door of a public coffee-house, and send in for your gallant?—Had I not happened to be there, had not these eyes and ears been witnesses of your guilt, you might, and doubtless would have deny'd, forsworn it.

Aglaura. I meant no harm; I only wanted to rally him a little about something I had heard concerning him.

Cleanthes. Infamous, abandon'd prostitute! Have I not an hundred times insisted on your never speaking to that fellow more, nor to that other coxcomb, Le Brune? yet had you not the front to run arm in arm this morning with the one into the vineyard in the face of the whole Mall, and at night came in pursuit of the other? But this is no time for expostulation; I am now convinced of the injury you have done me.

I kept pretty near to them, 'till they got into a coach, and drove away; and I went home so much astonished at what I had heard, that I had not power to make any reflections on it for some time.

My

My mind, however, grew more settled by a night's repose, and impatient to know how they would behave to each other after what had pass'd, I went directly to their house : Cleanthes was up alone, and at breakfast.—Soon after my entrance, a servant-maid came in and said to him,

Maid. Sir, my lady has call'd for a dish of chocolate ; but I would not presume to carry any up without your permission, as your orders last night were so positive that she should be fed with nothing but water-gruel and dry bread.

Cleanthes. Why then do you trouble me now ?
——Do you think I gave orders at night to retract them in the morning ?——Be gone, and let me hear no more of it.

The maid withdrew, and I followed her to the room where Aglaura was now lodged, which was indeed a wretched garret : she was in bed weeping ; but on the maid's repeating the commands of Cleanthes, her tears flow'd faster :——she wrung her hands,—she beat her breast ; but it is more easy for the reader to conceive her despair than for me to express it ; so I shall only say the spectacle was too moving, I could not bear it, but left the house immediately, and return'd not thither 'till after eight or ten days, in which time the town was apprised of the sufferings of Aglaura, and spoke of the strange change of Cleanthes in the manner I have already related.

On my next visit Cleanthes had with him an elderly lady, who I afterwards understood was his aunt : she came, it seems, to persuade him to treat his transgressing wife with less severity ;——the discourse between them was as follows :

Lady. I am as sensible as you can be of the faults of Aglaura, and the dishonour she has brought upon you ; yet, my dear nephew, you demean
Vol. II. O yourself

yourself by using in this fashion a woman, who, though unworthy, is still your wife.

Cleanthes. Madam, I can no longer think of her as a wife, nor ever as a woman ; but as a dog that had bit me, or a serpent that had stung me.

Lady. Put her then out of your house.

Cleanthes. That would be giving her an opportunity of disgracing me more by her prostitutions: no, since I have not proofs for a divorce, I will confine her here 'till I can send her for ever from my sight : I have already wrote to a tenant of mine in Yorkshire ; he will be in town next week, and take her with him to his house.

The good lady took her leave, after having heard and approved this resolution, which, as I have been since informed, he put in execution as he had said.



THE CONCLUSION.

HERE, O reader ! a total stop is put to my endeavours to oblige thee !——Nature has baffled all my vain precautions to preserve my little virgin in her native purity.——The woman, whom I appointed to attend her, accidentally dropped from her pocket the picture of a very lovely youth ;——the girl, unfortunately for me, as well as for thee, took it up, was charm'd with it ;——sleep renewed the pleasing image in her mind, and added life and motion to it :——she dreamed that it was her bedfellow ;——that it kiss'd, embraced, and lay within her arms ;——so that in spite of all my cares, and without ever having seen the substance of a man, she has received an idea of the difference of sexes.

Her pretty fingers no longer have the power to cleanse my Tablets ;——the dialogue last repeated remains still unexpunged, and leaves no room for any future impresson. —— How grievous a disappointment to me !——how terrible a mortification ! but we must all submit to destiny, which compels me now to bid thee eternally adieu ! —— adieu ! —— adieu !

F I N I S.



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